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ABSTRACT

This study analyzed state policies on the identification and education of gifted students as reflected in legislation, regulations, rules, recommendations, and guidelines provided by 49 states. The elements examined include: (1) state mandated services, (2) district plans for the gifted, (3) gifted education as part of special education, (4) philosophy or rationale, (5) definitions of gifted and talented, (6) identification procedures, (7) programs for the gifted, (8) differentiated curriculum and instruction, (9) counseling and other support services, (10) parent involvement, (11) program evaluation, (12) teacher education and certification, and (13) state funding for the gifted. The analysis indicated that all states have formulated policies that support education of the gifted and talented but that considerable variability among states exists with respect to specific components. Major recommendations are made in the following areas: establishing challenging curriculum standards; providing high-level learning opportunities; ensuring access to early childhood education; offering extended opportunities for economically disadvantaged and minority children; providing teacher training and technical assistance; and matching the high performance of similar students throughout the world. (Contains 76 references.) (DB)

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State Policies Regarding Education of the Gifted as Reflected in Legislation and Regulation

A. Harry Passow, Ed.D.
Teachers College, Columbia University
New York, NY

Rose A. Rudnitski, Ed.D.
State University of New York College at New Paltz
New Paltz, NY

October 1993
Collaborative Research Study
CRS93302

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THE NATIONAL RESEARCH CENTER ON THE GIFTED AND TALENTED

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About the Authors...

Dr. A. Harry Passow is the Jacob H. Schiff Professor Emeritus of Education at Teachers College, Columbia University, where he was a faculty member for 40 years. In 1954, he initiated and directed the Talented Youth Project at Teachers College and for the next 12 years conducted research on important issues and problems dealing with the education of the gifted. He has authored or edited numerous publications including: *Planning for Talented Youth*, *The Gifted and the Talented: Their Education and Development*, *Gifted Young Scientists: Potential Through Performance*, *The International Handbook of Research and Development of the Gifted and Talented*, as well as dozens of journal articles, book chapters, research reports, and monographs. Professor Passow is active in the World Council for Gifted and Talented Children, Inc., serving as President from 1985-1989, having been the Honorary Director from 1979-1985. He has been a board member of the National Association for Gifted Children for many years. Dr. Passow serves as a consultant on educating the gifted and talented in a number of countries abroad as well as across the nation.

Dr. Rose A. Rudnitski is an Assistant Professor of Education at the State University of New York College at New Paltz where she is the Director of Programs in Reading and the Master of Science in Teaching Program. Dr. Rudnitski is the Chair of the National Association for Gifted Children's Conceptual Foundations Division and a member of the Editorial Review Board of the *Gifted Child Quarterly*. She has been a music teacher and a coordinator of programs for the gifted. Professor Rudnitski serves as a consultant on curriculum, education of the gifted, and reform to a number of school districts.

State Policies Regarding Education of the Gifted as Reflected in Legislation and Regulation

A. Harry Passow, Ed.D.
Teachers College, Columbia University
New York, NY

Rose A. Rudnitski, Ed.D.
State University of New York College at New Paltz
New Paltz, NY

ABSTRACT

This study consists of an analysis of state policies on the identification and education of the gifted as reflected in legislation, regulations, rules, recommendations, and guidelines provided by 49 of the 50 states. The report is not a state-by-state description of policies but rather an analysis of the elements or components that comprise a comprehensive policy for identifying and nurturing talent potential.

The analysis indicates considerable variability among states so that there is no single model that provides a pattern for other states to follow. Some state policies are clearer, more positive, and more directive than others. Some documents are stronger with respect to specific components (e.g., nature of mandate, identification, curriculum, or evaluation).

The elements examined include:

State mandated services
District plans for the gifted
Gifted education as part of special education
Philosophy or rationale
Definitions of gifted and talented
Identification procedures
Programs for the gifted
Differentiated curriculum and instruction
Counseling and other support services
Program evaluation
State funding for the gifted

The fact that all 50 states have formulated policies in the form of legislation, regulations, rules, or guidelines that support education of the gifted and talented represents a very significant achievement, a consequence of vigorous and persistent efforts on the part of many advocates. Having attained this goal, the time is now right for a reexamination of existing policies, taking into account research, experience, and developments in education, psychology, organization, and related fields; the ongoing school reform and restructuring efforts; the changing context for society and schooling that is occurring; the distinctive state-local relationships by which diverse mandates and the regulations permitting discretionary programs are implemented differently; and the consequences of the ways local school districts have implemented state policies.

A number of suggestions are provided for educators and other advocates as they reexamine and reassess their state's policies. These suggestions deal with the elements or components of a comprehensive policy for the education of the gifted and talented.

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A. Harry Passow, Ed.D.
Teachers College, Columbia University
New York, NY

Rose A. Rudnitski, Ed.D.
State University of New York College at New Paltz
New Paltz, NY

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Introduction

This study was undertaken because of a concern about issues that seem to impede the development of lasting educational adaptations to meet the needs of the gifted and the consequent cyclical nature of interest and effort on their behalf. It has long been argued by advocates that a state mandate is needed if programs for the gifted are to thrive, but the situation does not appear to be that simple. Many states have policy statements dealing with the gifted but these seemed to collapse as soon as there were pressures to place educational priorities and resources elsewhere.

In response to requests for materials dealing with policies on educating the gifted and talented, 49 of the 50 states provided documents. These documents consisted of legislation, regulations, rules, handbooks, and resource materials—all of which made explicit or implicit policy statements. Some states provided only a single page while others supplied lengthy laws or regulations. One state furnished four manuals.

This report provides an array of examples to demonstrate the complexity of the web of legislation and regulation that entangles the development and implementation of programs at the local level. Local school officials interested in providing programs and services to address the needs of the gifted look at state policy for guidance as well as support. Thus, state-level policy is an important and often a crucial element in local educational planning efforts. In turn, both state and local policies are influenced, if not sometimes driven by, federal policies.

This report is not a state-by-state description since that approach would not highlight aspects of policy that appear to be essential in creating and maintaining strong programs. Moreover, state policies and regulations are constantly in flux, subject to change each time a legislature convenes or a governor or a state superintendent changes his/her program or priorities. Instead the report is arranged in terms of the aspects or elements that are believed to contribute to a comprehensive policy for identifying and educating the gifted and talented. It includes suggestions for strengthening specific components or aspects of policy.

The analysis indicates considerable variability among the states so that there is no single model that provides a pattern for other states to follow. Some state policies are clearer, more positive, and more directive than others. Some documents are stronger than others with respect to specific components (e.g., nature of mandate, identification, curriculum, or evaluation).

The purpose of this study was to provide a wide audience—policy and decision-makers at all levels, educators, parents, advocates, and others—with an understanding of where states are (or were) regarding policies for educating gifted and talented students. States can learn from each other's legislation and regulations, borrowing language, concepts, provisions and ideas from one another. In addition, educators, parents, and other community members should find the analysis useful in strengthening the policies of local districts on the one hand, and in advocating the design for stronger or more meaningful state policies, on the other hand.

The Context for Policy for the Gifted

Education of the gifted has a long history, going back well over a century. However, it was the *Marland Report* (1972) that resulted in the direct, proactive involvement of the federal government in the education of gifted in a serious way for the first time. The U.S. Office of Education became a policy advocate for gifted education and undertook a leadership training effort aimed at building support among policymakers, legislators, educators, board members, and the public in most states.

One of the most important outcomes of the *Marland Report* was its influence on state and local school systems. The report stimulated state and local activities at an unprecedented level with policy formulations that resulted in statutory descriptions or definitions of the gifted; regulations regarding identification of such children; appointment of personnel to state education departments with briefs to initiate, coordinate, and support educational programs and services for the gifted; appropriation of state-generated funds for such programs and services; and provisions for both preservice and inservice education of teachers for the gifted. When federal funds were made available for research and program development for the gifted under the provisions of the Special Projects Act of Public Law 93-380 (1975), the formulation of a "state plan" was a requirement for applying. Not every state took all of these actions, but in many different venues at many different levels, education of the gifted reached a level it had never before attained.

Of the 32 states that had enacted legislation mandating services for the gifted by 1990, only two (Pennsylvania and Georgia) had established those mandates prior to the *Marland Report*. Of the states that support discretionary or permissive programs, only three (California, Connecticut, and North Carolina) passed legislation prior to the 1970s. Federal policy stemming from the *Marland Report* and the Education for All Handicapped Children Act (P.L. 94-142) had positive effects on the formulation of state and local policies toward programs and provisions for the gifted and talented. While it is state-level policy that drives and guides local education policy and programming, such policies are clearly affected by federal policy.

The policies, regulations, rules, and guidelines regarding the education of the gifted and talented vary widely and reflect the different state/local education agency (SEA-LEA) relationships and roles. Many states that mandate gifted programs have state departments that tend to exercise stricter curriculum, programmatic, and fiscal control as well as, in some cases, oversight of textbook selection. A major determinant of a state policy that either mandates a gifted program or permits a discretionary program is the nature of the SEA-LEA relationships (i.e., the kind of accountability, curricular and instructional direction, evaluation, supervision or monitoring, funding) that the state requires from or provides for its local school districts for education in general. The absence or presence of strict controls and jurisdictions determine the nature of programs for the gifted, regardless of how structured the rules and regulations appear to be. Because of these different

relationships between state education departments and their local districts, it is uncertain which policy—one that mandates or only permits programs for the gifted, provides greater or lesser specificity, clearer or less clear standards, more or less detailed directives, rules, or requirements—results in gifted programs that are "better," more stable, and have greater continuity.

Elements or Components of State Policies

The legislation or regulations that constitute state policies deal with a number of aspects or components of programming for the gifted. This study employed a qualitative approach, drawing examples from the various state documents to illustrate how these elements of gifted education policy are treated similarly and differently. A quantitative analysis—the number of states that have laws or rules dealing with some program component—was not undertaken. At points, such data are presented but the analyses of Coleman and Gallagher (1992) and the Council of State Directors (1991) are cited.

State Mandated Services. Mandated services are required services and carry with them some variation of a must directive for local districts. Mandated programs usually include provisions for accountability on the part of the local districts. Discretionary programs carry a permissive *may*. In discretionary programs, certain standards may be recommended or suggested, but not required, although the availability of discretionary funds is usually contingent upon adherence to those standards.

Coleman and Gallagher (1992) reported that two-thirds of the states "have some type of mandate regarding attention to gifted students, which is supported, to some degree, with state funding"; 14 had no state level mandates and two states had "no mention" of the gifted (pp. 7-8). Some states mandate services for the gifted but appropriate no funds, while others support discretionary programs and do provide funding.

A state mandate for programming for the gifted requires local school districts to at least think about addressing their needs. However, a mandate is only a beginning—it does not guarantee excellent or even appropriate services unless other conditions are established. Strongest state policies provide a clear mandate for services and attach funding to program standards and other conditions.

District Plans for the Gifted. Some states either require or recommend that local districts prepare a plan for identifying and educating gifted children—a requirement or suggestion that seems not to be related to whether or not the state has legislation that mandates or supports discretionary services for the gifted. Several states call for district plans that must follow specific guidelines. These provide basic frameworks within which each local district has a license to formulate its own plan, as long as it deals with the components that the state believes should be part of a comprehensive plan for educating the gifted.

Gifted Education as Part of Special Education. About a fifth of the states include the gifted and talented as special education students covered by the Education for All Handicapped Children Act of 1975 (Public Law 94-142). Inclusion as an area of exceptionality covered by this act presumably strengthens a state's policy stance toward the gifted and talented and insures due process rights to gifted students. In addition, P.L. 94-142 requires that Individualized Education Programs (IEPs) be prepared for each child based on the diagnostic findings of the evaluation or assessment study provided. Although this would be appear to be ideal, the preparation of IEPs for the handicapped has proven problematic and seems to be even more so for the gifted.

Philosophy or Rationale. A statement of philosophy expresses a rationale or basis for a state's legislation or regulations. Directly or indirectly, any educational statement or action is driven by the stated or implicit philosophy behind it. A clear declaration of philosophy communicates the reason why such a policy needs formulating in the first place. When clearly expressed, the philosophy conveys an unclouded message to educators, parents, and the community as to how gifted education is viewed by policymakers.

Definitions of Gifted and Talented. The *Marland Report* or the "U.S. Office of Education" definition has dominated state definitions. Most state definitions focus on intellectual or cognitive abilities although many definitions go beyond intellectual ability or learning aptitude and include some or all of the areas cited in the *Marland Report*.

The Council of State Directors' (1991) study reported that:

> *General intellectual ability* was reported by 46 states to be the *most common area of giftedness identified* in their state's definition. Forty-four states report *specific academic aptitude*, followed by *creative thinking ability* (37 states), *advanced ability in the fine/creative arts* (32 states) and *leadership ability* (26 states). *Psychomotor ability, psychosocial and vocational aptitude* were included in 5 or fewer states. (p. 2)

The Coleman and Gallagher survey (1992) found that 49 states included intelligence and achievement in their definitions and identification procedures; 40 states incorporated creativity; 34 states, artistic abilities; 28 states, leadership potential; 15 states, critical thinking; and 10 states, psychomotor abilities.

Although local programs appear to be beginning to adopt versions of Gardner's seven multiple intelligences, Sternberg's triarchic model, or other broadened conceptions of giftedness, these seem not to have found their way into state policies as yet.

Identification Procedures. Policies regarding identification procedures range from broad guidelines or suggestions to specific standards to very detailed lists of instruments that local districts may use in identifying gifted and talented students as defined by the state legislation or regulation. Several states specify procedures and instruments for identifying gifted youngsters who are "economically, culturally and/or environmentally" disadvantaged. Some 34 states deal with identifying artistic or performing arts talent and one includes vocationally talented students.

Urging that identification "should be positive, dynamic, flexible, inclusive (not exclusive), and ongoing," one state's guidelines emphasize that "identification is a process which helps us better to recognize students' characteristics so we can plan instruction more effectively."

A strong state policy on identification would provide both flexibility and guidance for the local school district, requiring districts to think about the broad spectrum of techniques and instruments that might be used to screen for a range of potential abilities. An identification policy should require districts to explore and apply procedures for identifying students from underserved populations—the handicapped, the disadvantaged, and minority groups.

Programs for the Gifted. "Program" has many different meanings in state legislation and regulation. In some instances, program encompasses everything that has to do with the gifted including definition, identification, instruction, organization, evaluation,

and funding. In other policy statements, program refers primarily to the instructional aspects, the arrangement of teaching and learning conditions.

States vary widely with respect to program elements required or recommended, although most states encourage local program development according to the needs of the population of a particular school community. States vary in the elements with which they choose to deal—some stressing program parts such as rationale, goals, objectives, teaching methods, and evaluation plans, while others choose to highlight grouping structures or early admission procedures, part- or full-time classes, magnet schools, cluster grouping, resource rooms, special classes, Advanced Placement Program, International Baccalaureate, independent study, summer and out-of-school classes, and counseling and guidance are all found in state documents. Practically every state provides flexibility to local districts to implement policies regarding programming for the gifted.

Differentiated Curriculum and Instruction. Although curriculum and instruction are at the heart of programming for the gifted, there is little specificity or guidance in the treatment of the topic in state documents. Many state policies refer to, advocate, or mandate "differentiated curriculum" or "appropriate curriculum" but usually give little indication of what is intended or what is required. Few documents deal specifically with aspects of curricular goals and objectives, curriculum content, instructional strategies, pacing, and program outcomes. Some relate curriculum for the gifted to the regular curriculum, usually indicating that the gifted must fulfill those requirements but sometimes suggesting ways differentiation should be provided.

State policies tend not to deal with the issues concerning the subjects to be studied, the courses that must be taken, the standards or attainment levels that must be realized, the scope and sequence that should be followed, or the curricular balance that should be attained. State policies are especially weak with respect to aesthetic and affective education, which receive only minimal attention, if any.

A number of states are currently engaged in establishing standards in most, if not all, curricular areas. State policies would be strengthened by specific attention of curriculum standards for the gifted as an integral part of creating curriculum standards for all students.

Counseling and Other Support Services. While it is generally recognized that guidance, psychological, and other support services are needed, in some states the gifted are specifically omitted from support services mandated for special education students, often on the assumption that they can be assisted by the services available to the general student population.

A few states suggest that gifted and talented students have distinctive counseling and psychological needs, particularly in the affective areas of social and emotional development, requiring special support services. This is especially so in working with underrepresented groups. One state requires special training in guidance and counseling of gifted students and their parents for guidance personnel seeking license endorsement.

Parents. Most state policies regarding the gifted require, recommend, or suggest that parents be involved in all facets of their children's education—identification, placement, program, support, enrichment, and advocacy. Parent involvement is required under P.L. 94-142, particularly in the development and approval of the Individualized Education Plan.

State policies encourage, or in a few cases require, parent participation in programs for their gifted children in ways that include: serving on planning committees, involvement in the identification process, taking part in the placement process, and acting as mentors and advocates. Involvement in the education of their gifted children is a matter of parental right and responsibility in some state policies.

Teacher Education and Certification. Although states are in agreement regarding the importance of teachers in the identification and education of gifted students, relatively few specify special certification or endorsement requirements or detail preservice or inservice education. Some policies refer to the need for staff development and urge that it be provided, but are usually vague about the nature of such teacher education.

The Council of State Directors (1991) reported that special certification requirements must be met in 14 states, primarily through graduate or inservice courses. The Coleman and Gallagher study (1992) found that 20 state policies include some mention of personnel preparation. There is little mention of teacher preparation, especially at the preservice level, in most policy statements.

Program Evaluation. Evaluation plays an important part in many state policy statements—sometimes required, but more often suggested. The evaluation process may focus on individual student assessment, on program appraisal or, in some cases, on both. In several states, especially where education of the gifted is part of special education, "evaluation" is used synonymously with individual diagnosis and identification.

Several documents recommend, as one state's does, that program evaluation "should interact with and support program implementation from start to finish" and contribute to the decision-making process. One state's guide recommends that evaluation focus on both the overall program operation as well as specific student progress in order "to determine the extent to which program goals, objectives, and activities are being achieved, and their impact upon student progress."

Program evaluation is required by some states for funding and, in other states, for accreditation. For example, one state requires a 3-5 year plan that provides evidence that attention is being given to several program components, including evaluation.

State Funding for the Gifted. The Council of State Directors (1991) survey found that "thirty-seven states reported an estimated $394,874,326 in state funding [was] being distributed between local education agencies and intermediate agencies for gifted/talented programs"(p. 23). State funding ranged from $88 million to $100,000. When the federal government and states all over the nation faced severe budget crises in the early 1990s, funding in a number of states became precarious. Some states continued to legislate financial support but failed to appropriate the monies needed for that funding.

States employ complex, intricate, and diverse procedures in the methods used to fund local school districts in general, and the same can be said about funding programs for the gifted. State funding may be determined by foundation formulas, weighted per pupil units, fixed per pupil amounts, and other bases. In some states, districts are reimbursed for particular costs, such as those involved in identification of gifted students, teacher/coordinator salaries and benefits, instructional materials, transportation, or staff development activities.

Strengthening the Foundations for Gifted Education

In many ways, education for the gifted has come a long way since pre-*Marland* days. The fact that all 50 states have formulated policies in the form of legislation, regulations, rules, or guidelines that support education of the gifted and talented represents a very significant achievement, a consequence of vigorous and persistent efforts on the part of many advocates—parents, educators, politicians, and others. Having attained this goal, the time is now right for a reexamination of existing policies, taking into account research, experience, and developments in education, psychology, organization, and related fields; the ongoing school reform and restructuring efforts; the changing context for society and schooling that is occurring; the distinctive state-local relationships by which the diverse mandates and the regulations permitting discretionary programs are implemented differently; and the consequences of the ways local school districts have implemented state policies.

A number of suggestions are provided for educators and other advocates as they reexamine and reassess their state's policies. These suggestions deal with the elements or components of a comprehensive policy for the education of the gifted and talented.

Moving Forward in Educating the Gifted and Talented

Education of the gifted and talented does not take place in a vacuum. The passage of legislation or formulation of regulations that expresses a state's policy occurs as part of a complex, economic, political, and educational context. The past decades have witnessed major societal developments that impact on education and schooling in general and, of course, on the education of the gifted and talented. Examples of some of these developments in the area of educational reform indicate the kind of changes educators of the gifted need to consider as they review and reassess state policies.

The publication of the first major report on gifted and talented since the *Marland Report, National Excellence: The Case for Developing America's Talents* (U.S. Department of Education, 1993), provides a focus for policy review with six major recommendations dealing with: challenging curriculum standards, high-level learning opportunities, early childhood education, extended opportunities for economically disadvantaged and minority children, teacher training and technical assistance, and matching world performance. This new report could have a significant impact on state policies as did the earlier report.

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Preface

We undertook this study because we were concerned about several issues that seem to impede the development of lasting educational adaptations to meet the needs of the gifted. We were especially troubled with the cyclical nature of interest in the field and were apprehensive that the U.S. was again experiencing an ebb in interest in maintaining programs and provisions for this population. Education of the gifted in the U.S.A. has a long and informative history, dating back to the mid-19th century. It is a history with many lessons to be learned and, while this is not the document to recount that story, it was on our minds as we progressed with this study. From time to time, we will recall history to clarify a point.

We knew that many states had policy statements dealing with the education of the gifted but that these did not seem to hold up very well, as soon as there were pressures to place educational priorities elsewhere. As we delved more deeply into the policy statements, usually in the form of legislation, regulations, and guidelines, we found as many strong statements as weak ones; as many well-constructed statements of commitment as well-intentioned statements of conciliation.

In this report, we provide an array of examples to demonstrate the complexity of the web of legislation and regulation regarding the gifted/talented that entangles the development and implementation of programs at the local level. Our rationale for starting here was the assumption that local school officials interested in providing programs and services to address the needs of the gifted look to state policy for guidance as well as support. Thus, state-level policy is an important and often a crucial element in local educational planning efforts. Both state and local policies are, in turn, influenced by federal policies.

The Basis for This Report

In 1991, in response to our request, 42 of the 50 state departments of education sent us documents dealing with policies, legislation, regulations, handbooks and other materials guiding gifted education in their states. In January 1992, in response to our request that they update the materials they had sent, we received additional information from some states plus documents from seven states that had not responded earlier.

This report is based on documents we received from 49 of the 50 states. State documents ranged from a single page to as many as four large documents. Some documents consisted of legislation, others of regulations, and still others of handbooks and resource materials. All of the documents used are listed in the bibliography at the end of this report.

After we had received these documents, two publications were issued that also reported studies of state policies. The Council of State Directors of Programs for the Gifted (1991) published *The 1990 State of the States Gifted and Talented Education Report* that "was designed to give a broad perspective on the status of gifted and talented education in the United States, the District of Columbia and Trust Territories" (p. ix). Coleman and Gallagher (1992) issued their *Report on State Policies Related to the Identification of Gifted Students*. We found both of these studies, each using a different analytic approach from ours, very informative and helpful. The Council of State Directors report is divided into eight topical sections each of which is addressed in a table format with a terse narrative. Coleman and Gallagher reviewed "state level policies related to the identification of gifted

students from special populations, e.g., culturally diverse, economically disadvantaged, and students with disabilities" (p. i). Although focused on underserved gifted populations, their report provides far more information on identification policies and practices.

We employ a qualitative approach, drawing examples from the documents provided us to illustrate how states treat elements of gifted education policy similarly and differently. We did not undertake quantitative analyses. Where such data are presented, we draw from and cite either the Coleman and Gallagher or the Council of State Directors studies.

Terms and Concepts

As is clear from the list of references, the documents with which we worked carry many labels and titles. Our request to the state officers was for "any document(s) that would inform us of state policies for the gifted." Most were quite recent but others were several years old. All presumably were still in effect at the time. A number of the responders indicated that new legislation was in the works or that regulations were being revised. In the business of state legislation or regulation, "a state of flux" appears to be normal.

The terms *policy*, *legislation*, *regulations*, and *guidelines* are used interchangeably with the latter three subsumed under *policy*. The following discussion may prove helpful in discriminating among these terms and indicate how we use them.

Policy. The word *policy* has several meanings with respect to gifted education. One is the definition associated with a governmental statement or plan of action. Another, not so directly associated with government, is that of an *insurance policy* that protects against a loss. A group that requires a specific policy is one with special needs and circumstances or one that has been found to have been denied rights under normal circumstances in the past. The fact that a state has a policy on the education of the gifted implies that the state recognizes that the gifted might otherwise be denied an appropriate education; that, in the past, the gifted may have been denied an appropriate education; and that the gifted need an appropriate education in the first place. Its existence also implies that it is the *responsibility* of the government to insure that access to an appropriate education is secured for the gifted. At least in theory, the existence of a state policy suggests that *an appropriate public education is a specific right for a gifted individual.* For this reason, it is important that a state have a written policy on the gifted.

Legislation, regulations, guidelines, and recommendations. Legislation is a law that presumably must be enforced. Legislation can also take the form of a policy statement that carries no implication of mandate but suggests that the government recognizes the need to take a stand on an issue or problem. *Regulations* are rules intended to guide performance or behavior. Regulations may detail the way a law is to be implemented. *Guidelines* and/or *recommendations* are suggestions or principles intended to provide guidance for action or behavior. A state legislature may create guidelines for planning programs for the gifted and encourage the development of such programs, but only recommend that programs for the gifted be created. Guidelines and/or recommendations are not laws nor mandates nor directives requiring compliance.

Mandate. A *mandate* is an order. In the case of gifted education, a mandate would mean an order to provide an appropriate education for gifted students. Having a mandate does not necessarily imply that a state funds the programs it has ordered or even provides guidelines or standards for those programs and their teachers. Mandates are open to interpretation and may be construed in many different ways.

The Organization of This Report

We considered several ways to organize the data. One obvious approach was to arrange the report state-by-state, but we felt that such a structure would not highlight aspects of policy that we think are essential in creating and maintaining strong programs. In the end, it is these aspects or elements of a complete or comprehensive policy for the gifted that we have used to arrange the data.

The Introduction provides the background or context. We cite a few significant historical points but feel that this is not the document to recount the complete history of the education of the gifted, a story from which a good deal can be learned and which is well worth writing.

Following the introduction, each section heading represents an element or an aspect of a state policy that we believe is essential to a coherent, comprehensive policy statement. Each section begins with a brief overview and summary of how this element is dealt with in state documents. A sampling of passages from state legislation or regulations dealing with this component follows. We do not include every state's policy regarding a particular element but only examples intended to illustrate the different ways states treat this component. Because we have not used an excerpt from a particular state does not mean that the element is not treated adequately or appropriately in that state's policy. Rather, we have tried to keep selections to a minimum, sufficient to illustrate treatment of the policy element but not to overload the reader. Even so, the reader may feel we have too many redundant quotations. We end each section with our suggestions for strengthening state policy statements regarding that component.

The Constant Changes in Legislation and Regulations. It must be kept in mind that state legislation and regulations are constantly in flux, subject to change each time a legislature convenes or a governor or a state superintendent reviews his/her priorities. Recent years have been no different and a combination of economic, political, and social factors have had an impact on policies and programs for the gifted and talented, not all of which could be reflected in this report because of the lapse of time. When we do assert that a specific number of states deal with some policy element in a particular way, the numbers are those reported by Coleman and Gallagher (1992) and/or the Council of State Directors (1991), and we cite the source.

Why This Policy Analysis? In examining these many state documents, it is clear that there is no single model that provides a pattern for other states to follow. Overall, some state policies are clearer and more positive than others. Some documents are stronger than others with respect to specific components—e.g., mandate, identification, curriculum, or evaluation. There is considerable variability among the state documents.

Our purpose in undertaking this study was to provide a wide audience—policy and decision-makers at all levels, educators, parents, advocates, and others—with an understanding of where the states are (or were) regarding their policies for educating the gifted and talented. We think states can learn from each other's legislation and regulations and borrow language, concepts, provisions, and ideas from one another. In addition, we have tried to suggest ways of strengthening state policies in the context of current reform and restructuring efforts.

Finally, we think that educators, parents, and other members of the community can use this document in at least two ways. One way is to strengthen the policies of local school districts. State policies must be implemented by local districts which, in turn, determine local policies to guide their program implementation. The second way is to use

the document to strengthen their advocacy of stronger or more meaningful state policies. Advocacy and support for improving the education and nurturing of the gifted and talented in a system designed to provide an appropriate education for all children and youth is a never-ending responsibility.

State Policies Regarding Education of the Gifted as Reflected in Legislation and Regulation

A. Harry Passow, Ed.D.
Teachers College, Columbia University
New York, NY

Rose A. Rudnitski, Ed.D.
State University of New York College at New Paltz
New Paltz, NY

Introduction

In 1971, Congress mandated that the U.S. Commissioner of Education conduct a study to ascertain the extent to which special educational provisions were necessary to meet the needs of the gifted, to determine how programs of federal assistance could become more effective in meeting these students' needs, and to recommend what new programs were needed at the federal level. The Congressional mandate was fulfilled when the Commissioner at that time, Sidney P. Marland, Jr., submitted what has since become known as the *Marland Report* (U.S. Office of Education, 1972).

The *Marland Report* resulted in the direct proactive involvement of the federal government in the education of the gifted in a serious way for the first time. Two earlier Office of Education publications simply reported the results of national surveys: *Statistics of Special Schools and Classes for Exceptional Children* (1950) included the gifted as one area of exceptionality and *Teaching Rapid and Slow Learners in High Schools* (1954) described teaching practices for the gifted. Neither had any policy recommendations, just the facts.

In the *Marland Report*, gifted and talented students were designated as a population with special needs, a broad definition of "gifted and talented" was proposed, and the U.S. Office of Education was directed to provide staff whose responsibility was the improvement of educational opportunities for the gifted and the development of the elements of a national strategy for educating gifted and talented students. The Office of Education became a policy advocate for gifted education. Among many other activities, it undertook a leadership training effort that involved almost every state, aimed at building support among policymakers, legislators, educators, board members, and the public.

Because education is essentially a function of the states, it can be argued that one of, if not the most important, outcomes of the *Marland Report* was its influence and impact on the states and local school systems. The report stimulated state and local activities on an unprecedented level with policy formulations that resulted in statutory descriptions or definitions of the gifted; regulations regarding identification of such children; appointment of personnel to state education departments with briefs to initiate, coordinate, and support educational programs and services for the gifted; appropriation of state generated funds for such programs and services; and provisions for both pre- and in-service education of teachers for the gifted. In 1975, when for the first time federal funds were made available for research and program development for the gifted under the provisions of the Special Projects Act of Public Law 93-380, the formulation and adoption of a "state plan" became one of the key requirements for applying. Not every state took all of these actions, but in

many different venues at many different levels, education of the gifted reached a level it had never before attained. Because education is a state function, the responses and the concerns for the gifted have varied dramatically from state to state.

Another important event that affected gifted education policy was passage of the Education for All Handicapped Children Act of 1975 (Public Law 94-142) which required schools to individualize instruction for handicapped students and to provide such education in the "least restrictive environment." Although "gifted and talented" was not a category of handicap contained in P.L. 94-142, at least 17 states have since included the gifted as an "area of exceptionality" and have applied many, if not all, of the same standards and procedures for those students as for the handicapped.

There are no states which have in the past or currently prohibit special programming for the gifted or talented. A few other nations have barred programs for the gifted, usually on the basis of "egalitarianism." Although there never have been any prohibitions, it was not until after the 1970s and into the 1980s that most states took positive actions regarding the education of the gifted and talented. Of the 32 states that had enacted legislation mandating services for the gifted by 1990, only Pennsylvania (1963) and Georgia (1964) had established those mandates before the *Marland Report* (1972). Of the states that support discretionary or permissive programs for the gifted, only three (California, Connecticut, and North Carolina) passed legislation prior to the 1970s. Clearly, federal policy stemming from the *Marland Report* and Education for All Handicapped Children Act (P.L. 94-142) had positive effects on the formulation of state and local policies toward programs and provisions for the gifted and talented.

In general, it is state level policy that drives and guides local education policy and programs, but such policies are also affected by federal policy. Although local control of education has been the bedrock on which the common school and universal education have rested, the federal government has exerted increasing influence on state and local educational policies. Much of it has been indirectly since its funding, particularly for gifted education, has always been limited. During the past three decades, the federal share of all monies spent on education has ranged between 5-7 percent of the nation's total expenditures, but the federal impact has been much greater than its proportion of educational funding.

Over the years, there have been many events that affected the education of the gifted. One such critical event was the October 1957 launching of Sputnik. In response to the perceived threat to America's national security, the National Defense Education Act of 1958 (NDEA) was passed. NDEA provided funding for developing new curricula and staff development aimed at upgrading science, mathematics, and foreign languages. NDEA proved to be watershed legislation in that for the first time the federal policy asserted a commitment to upgrading curricula and to supporting staff development for teachers who would deliver that curricula. While not specifically aimed at the gifted, many of the NDEA efforts gave special attention to needs of the "academically talented students," a popular term at the time. Gifted students profited from this first major federal policy that backed the various efforts to improve the quality of curriculum and teaching with funding. Together with other agency efforts, such as those of the National Science Foundation, federal programs stimulated support for the gifted from states, professional associations, and philanthropic foundations. These efforts gradually dwindled as national priorities changed and political crises and issues.

Although programs for the gifted were established by some local districts long before the NDEA federally supported activities—several trace their beginnings to the turn of the century—it can be argued that it has been federal policy that has triggered recent state

and local endeavors for the gifted. Public Law 94-142 specified procedures for determining an appropriate education for exceptional pupil populations as well, procedures which could be and, in some states have been applied to the gifted as well. Most recently, passage of the Jacob K. Javits Gifted and Talented Students Education Act, focusing on populations underrepresented in gifted education, resulted in grantees designing programs for the identification and education of gifted among minorities and the poor—another example of federal policy influencing state and local programming.

Advocates of gifted education have long argued that for such programs to thrive, perhaps even to survive, there needs to be a consistent, committed policy developed and implemented at the state level. Supporters maintain that the waxing and waning, the cyclical nature that has characterized support for such efforts was caused, at least in part, by an absence or paucity of policy to direct local school districts in their planning and programming. At the state level, it is through legislation, rules, and regulations, that policy is expressed, directly or by implication. Rules, regulations or legislation constitute the state's "statement" that may either mandate that local districts create programs for the gifted or support discretionary efforts initiated at the local level, depending on the nature of the state/local education relationships.

There is no single model shaping the policies, regulations, rules, and guidelines regarding the education of the gifted and talented in the 50 states. The diverse models which do exist reflect the different state/local education agency (SEA-LEA) relationships and the roles played by the state agencies with respect to the local districts. For example, many of the states which mandate gifted programs have state departments which tend to exercise stricter curricular, programmatic, and fiscal control, as well as, in some cases, oversight of textbook adoption. A significant determinant of the consequences of a state policy which either mandates a gifted program or permits a discretionary program is the nature of the existing SEA/LEA relationships—i.e., the kind of accountability, curricular, and instructional direction, evaluation, supervision or monitoring, funding, etc., that the state requires from, or provides for, its local districts for education in general. The same issues which apply to "loosely coupled versus tightly coupled" organizational relationships between state and local education agencies, i.e., the absence or presence of strict controls and jurisdictions, apply to programs for the gifted, regardless of how structured the rules and regulations appear to be.

Because of these different relationships between state education departments and their local districts, it is uncertain which policy—one that mandates or only permits programs for the gifted, providing greater or lesser specificity, clearer or less clear standards, more or less detailed directives, rules or requirements—results in gifted programs which are "better," more stable, and have greater continuity.

In the two decades since the *Marland Report*, by enacting legislation promulgating regulations, formulating rules or simply providing guidelines, every state has made a policy statement regarding education of the gifted. In different ways and to different degrees of specificity and conviction, every state now acknowledges that there are gifted and talented pupils, though there is no single definition or description of such pupils. In different ways, every state recognizes that nurturing talent potential is essential for self-fulfillment as well as the benefit of society. Every state acknowledges that gifted pupils can and should be identified and that they require differentiated educational experiences and opportunities. Many states seem to admit that some additional resources may be needed in order to develop talent potential into talented performance, although not all provide extra funding. Many states have policies regarding program opportunities, teachers, program evaluation, and funding.

There are considerable variations in the extent and ways in which local school districts, the units that actually deliver educational services, implement state policies and translate them into instructional programs. These differences are a consequence of local policy statements, sometimes stemming from the LEA's (local education agency) interpretation of state policy and sometimes from the LEA initiating policy by exercising its discretionary power.

The ways the two general categories of state policy for the gifted, mandated or discretionary, are actually implemented depend on the integration of several salient factors which intermesh such as: philosophy, definition, identification methods, program requirements or recommendations, teacher certification and preparation, funding, and monitoring standards. State policies regarding the various components of a plan for gifted education range from those which are characterized by detailed, relatively specific requirements or mandates, carrying with them some variation of a *must* directive, to general, unspecific recommendations or permissive statements. Even where a state has legislation that mandates services for the gifted and talented, the detailed requirements cover a broad range of specificity and directive.

Currently at the state level, there is no lack of policies or guidelines regarding the education of the gifted. Every one of the 50 states has some kind of a written statement acknowledging the existence of gifted students and the need for an appropriate educational program. By 1990, with the exception of New Hampshire, every state had enacted legislation or regulations that either mandate services or supported discretionary programming for the gifted and talented. Even New Hampshire, which has neither mandatory nor discretionary legislation, has an Office of Gifted Education and has issued a 128-page publication titled *Guidelines for Planning Gifted Education Programming in New Hampshire* aimed at encouraging "schools to conceptualize and define programming constructively."

Each of the following sections deals with one of the elements or components of educational programming for the gifted and talented with examples chosen to indicate the range and diversity of treatments.

State Mandated Services

One of the most important elements of policy is whether or not programs or provisions for the gifted are mandated or discretionary. The Council of State Directors (1991) study noted that "twenty-six states presently report **mandated** services for gifted and talented" and "twenty-seven states report legislative support through **discretionary** programs for the gifted/talented" (p. 2). Coleman and Gallagher (1992) reported that at the time of their study "over half of the states (66%) have some type of mandate regarding attention to gifted students which is supported, to some degree, with state funding"; fourteen states (28%) had "no state level mandates for the education of gifted students"; two states (4%) had "no mention" of the gifted; and one (2%) had a "mandate with no state funding" (pp. 7-8). The discrepancies in these two reports illustrates the problems of analysis and interpretation.

Mandated Services. Mandated services are required services and carry with them some variation of a *must* directive for local districts. Mandated programs usually include provisions for accountability on the part of the local districts. In some states, the mandate takes the form of a set of standards that must be met if a program is to be approved for funding. Sometimes the mandate is contained in guidelines that are provided, as in Arkansas, "to assist districts in planning, implementing, and evaluating programs for gifted and talented students."

Some mandates are spelled out in some detail while others are quite brief and even vague. Some mandates simply direct local school districts to prepare a plan for providing services. Some examples of the broad, less detailed statements follow:

Alabama: Gifted is one exceptionality mandated for service in the "Alabama Exceptional Child Act" (Act 106).

Georgia: The Georgia Board of Education requires the development and operation of programs of gifted education for pupils who have high intellectual abilities and the potential for exceptional academic achievement in grades K-12 in the public schools of this state.

Illinois: Pursuant to the provisions of Section 14A-3.1 of The School Code..., each school district SHALL DEVELOP A PLAN WHICH EITHER PROVIDES OR MAKES AVAILABLE FOR ALL GIFTED AND TALENTED PUPILS GIFTED EDUCATION PROGRAM(S)...WHICH ENCOMPASS ALL GRADE LEVELS AND FUNDAMENTAL AREAS OF LEARNING....

South Carolina: Not later than August 15, 1987, gifted and talented students at the elementary and secondary levels must be provided programs during the regular school year or during summer school to develop their unique talents in the manner the State Board of Education must specify and to the extent state funds are provided.

Texas: The Texas Legislature has mandated that every district will have provisions for gifted students kindergarten through grade 12 by 1990-91 (Section 21.652, Texas Education Code). The quality of such programs is determined by the local school district. The state guidelines are designed to assist districts in developing, implementing, and maintaining effective services for gifted students.

Hawaii: The department is committed to providing appropriate educational opportunities at each school for its students. The department therefore acknowledges the necessity to identify gifted and talented students in various areas of giftedness and talent in every school and to make available appropriate educational opportunities, insofar as financial and physical resources are available within the department. The purpose of this chapter [Chapter 51] is to establish the procedures for the identification, programming, and placement of gifted and talented students.

Oklahoma: Each board of education shall adopt a written policy statement which includes [information regarding identification and due process procedures and differentiated programs].

Oregon: It is legislative policy that, when talented and gifted programs are offered, the programs shall be provided by common or union high school districts, combinations of such districts or education service districts, in accordance with ORS 334.175, and that the state will provide financial and technical support to the districts to implement the education programs within the limits of available funds.

In contrast to the mandates cited above, the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania, the first state to require that local districts provide for the gifted, sets forth its current program requirements in "must terms" as follows:

> All gifted school-age exceptional persons in Pennsylvania must be provided with a free public education that is appropriate and individualized. The individualized instruction may be provided as a special education approved program or as an approved differentiated basic education program. A combination of both options provides the greatest opportunity for flexible programming to meet the needs of the gifted.
>
> Regardless of program options all programs for the gifted must provide for procedural safeguards including but not limited to: Screening and assessment... Biennial evaluation, Annual IEP review, Parent participation, Continuous access to due process, Confidentiality of records.
>
> The student must be provided instruction at an appropriate level of challenge and with adjustments that accommodate individual needs in both program options.
>
> The program must be described in the special education plan of the school district and intermediate unit and approved by their respective boards even if only differentiated basic education alternatives are used to meet the needs of school-age gifted persons. This plan must be reviewed and revised at least once each year. Programs shall be developed in accordance with planned courses (curricula) to provide a continuum of programs and services appropriate for the student's age and development.

Discretionary or Permissive Programs. Discretionary programs carry a permissive *may*. In discretionary programs, certain standards may be recommended but not required, although in many instances, discretionary funds are contingent upon adherence to the standards.

Maryland is an example of a state that supports discretionary programs for the gifted. It has defined by law who the gifted and talented students are and the Department of Education provides "Criteria for Excellence." Its guide for local districts states:

All students in Maryland's schools must be provided educational opportunities appropriate to their individual abilities and which will enable them to reach their maximum potential. Gifted and talented students are one group which has unique abilities and needs.

In Missouri, "where a sufficient number of children are determined to be gifted and their development requires programs and services beyond the level of those ordinarily provided in regular public school programs," school districts may establish programs for the gifted. Michigan appropriates funds "for the development and operation of comprehensive programs for gifted and talented pupils." A district or consortium of districts may apply for such funding to implement a plan approved by the Department of Education, developed in accordance with criteria that the state department has established.

In Minnesota, school districts may establish programs for gifted children in accordance with state determined standards for such programs and may be reimbursed for part of the cost of instructional personnel and special materials listed on the local application and approved.

New York State provides funds for local districts operating gifted programs but does not require such programs: "If a school district does not wish to conduct a program for educating the gifted, as prescribed under Section 3602 of the Education Law, that district will not receive the formula allotment." Similarly, in Washington, "the offering of a program by a school district to serve highly capable students with categorical state funds is optional. However, if the school district accepts categorical state monies for this purpose, compliance with [Chapter 392-170 WAC] is mandatory."

Need for Meaningful Mandates. Where state mandates exist, they vary widely. While advocates for gifted education have contended that mandated programs are needed for program stability, there are some states which do mandate services but appropriate no funds, while others support discretionary programs and do provide funding. In the absence of funding, mandated services alone may not contribute to program stability.

It is obvious that a state mandate for programming for the gifted requires local school districts to at least think about addressing the needs of those students. However, a mandate is only a beginning. A simple mandate does not guarantee excellent or even appropriate services unless other conditions are set along with it. Strongest state policies provide a clear mandate for services and attach funding to program standards and other conditions.

District Plans for the Gifted

Some states either require or recommend that local districts prepare a plan for identifying and educating gifted children. The requirement or recommendation for a district plan seems not to be related to whether or not the state has legislation which mandates or supports discretionary services for the gifted. Some states provide detailed guidance for school districts in the preparation of local plans while others simply require that a plan be formulated.

An example of the latter is found in Ohio's requirement that each local school board formulate a written policy describing procedures for the identification of the gifted. Ohio provides the following sample plan:

> In accordance with Section 3313.21 O.R.C., it is the policy of this Board of Education that those students who are gifted, as defined by Rule of the State Board of Education (3301-51-15), and who are enrolled in grades one through twelve, shall be identified annually.

On the other hand, the following states furnish examples of detailed, explicit guidelines being provided school districts in the preparation of their plans for identifying and educating the gifted.

Colorado is a state with legislation which supports discretionary programs only. The Colorado State Board of Education recommends:

> that each school district have a plan which incorporates state standards as outlined in these Guidelines and determines the means for providing appropriate educational services to the gifted and talented students, K-12. It is recommended that each plan include but not be limited to the following components:
>
> 1. Rationale for programming for identified gifted and talented students.
> 2. A statement of local goals and objectives.
> 3. Procedures at all grade levels for ongoing referral and assessment resulting in appropriate services for gifted and talented students.
> 4. Description of Program—Comprehensive programming for gifted and talented students includes each of the following elements:
>
>   a. advanced work in curricular areas,
>   b. guidance and counseling services,
>   c. provisions for grouping according to cognitive and affective needs,
>   d. personalized learning plan,
>   e. enriched learning activities, including the arts,
>   f. differentiated instructional strategies, and
>   g. staff development.
>
> 5. Guidelines for the selection and training of personnel serving identified gifted and talented students.

6. Guidelines for the evaluation of the effectiveness of the school district's program for the gifted and talented. It is recommended that evaluation establish the impact of services on each student's education, including both processes and products related to these experiences. It is also recommended that evaluation also establish the effectiveness of local district programs according to the district plan.
7. Time line for implementation of plan.
8. Maintenance of appropriate records on individual students that provide documentation of assessed student needs, prescribed programming, and evaluation.
9. Other information as may be requested by the Colorado Department of Education.

California's regulations call for each district to develop a "written plan for the district program which shall be available for public inspection."

> The written plan shall describe the appropriately differentiated curricula for identified gifted and talented pupils as well as specify the methods used to examine the appropriateness of the identified pupil's total education experience including articulation with other specially funded programs which serve gifted and talented pupils. The plan shall include:
>
> 1. The purposes of the program, including the general goals and specific objectives which pupils are expected to achieve;
> 2. The rationale for the district's method of identification of gifted and talented pupils;
> 3. Where appropriate, procedure for the consideration of the identification and placement of a pupil who was identified as gifted or talented in the district from which the pupil transferred;
> 4. The services to be rendered and the activities to be included for pupils participating in special day classes, receiving special services, or participating in special activities for an amount of time specified in Education Code Section 52206;
> 5. Plan for evaluating the various components of the program. Evaluation shall include an annual review of pupil progress and of administration of the program.
> 6. Procedures for modifying the district gifted and talented program on the basis of the annual review;
> 7. A staff development plan based upon a needs assessment which includes specification of requisite competencies of teachers and supervisory personnel;
> 8. Procedures for ensuring continuous parent participation in recommending policy for planning, evaluating, and implementing the district program;
> 9. A procedure to inform parents of a pupil's participation or nonparticipation in the gifted and talented program;
> 10. An objective related budget.

New Hampshire's guidelines assert that "the first major responsibility is to develop a specific, comprehensive written 'Master Plan.' " and suggest that each school develop its own "Plan of Action," the development of which "may require at least six to 12 months of careful planning and hard work." The major questions which the Plan of Action should address are these:

- Rationale, model(s), benefits of the proposed programming approach.
- Establish "fit" between District Philosophy, Definition, and Goals and the School's Plan.
- Definitions of key terms in the Plan.
- What unique elements of the school's "culture," mission, or values have been considered in designing the plan? How are they reflected in proposed actions or responses?
- How will students' characteristics and needs be assessed?
- How does the regular school program insure challenge, recognize diversity, and offer opportunities for student productivity?
- How will regular school programs be extended, enhanced, or expanded?
- Who will be involved in programming, and in what ways?
- What in-service or staff development efforts will be undertaken to support the plan?
- What resources and budget implications are involved?
- What is the school's time line for implementation?
- How does the Plan relate to other projects or programs for school improvement or enhanced effectiveness?
- What aspects of the plan are unique or innovative?
- What is the proposed evaluation plan?

New York recommends that each district establish a broadly representative committee to write a plan for educating the gifted which, ideally, would include the following sections:

1. District's philosophy and definition of gifted
2. Program goals and objectives
3. Identification procedures
4. Programming (curriculum and instruction)
5. Program evaluation procedures
6. Teacher selection and education
7. Program management—roles and responsibilities; communication and awareness; budget, facilities and supplies
8. Timeline for activities

Alabama requires each local district to submit a written plan for serving their gifted students which will include:

> (1) the public education agency's philosophy of education for the gifted; (2) the goals and objectives for serving the gifted students in grades kindergarten through twelve; (3) the screening procedure preceding individual testing for placement; (4) the program options to be utilized to implement stated goals and objectives; (5) the system for program and individual student evaluation; (6) any other factors that directly pertain to the implementation of services; and (7) IEP format and content.

Meaningful District Plan Guidelines. The above five states' policies calling for district plans are exemplary in the specificity of their guidelines. They provide basic frameworks but each local district has a license to formulate its own plans, dealing with the components that the state believes should be part of a comprehensive plan. The states provide strong guidance without confining each district to conformity and standardization. Missing from the above guidelines is information concerning instructional space allotments and pupil/teacher ratios. Many programs in states that have strict mandates and program standards make no provision for proper space, so that programs for the gifted end up in storerooms and cafeterias. Many districts have teachers serving gifted populations in

several schools and responsible for providing programs for large numbers of students. In adding these components to local district plans, the possibilities increase for proper attention being paid to these important elements.

Gifted Education as Part of Special Education

Over the years, at teacher education institutions, state departments of education and school districts, gifted education has been housed or assigned to different departments or programs, most often to special education. Public Law 94-142, the Education for All Handicapped Children Act (1975), required states to establish new regulations regarding education of children requiring special education—definition, identification, and assessment, curriculum and instruction, preparation of Individualized Education Programs (IEPs), environment in which such students are taught, and modes of parent involvement.

In some states, the gifted and talented are included as special education students covered by the rules of P.L. 94-142. The Council of State Directors (1991) study noted that "10 states reported that programs for gifted/talented followed all the same policies and procedures as those for handicapped students" (p. 2) and that "twelve states require Individual Educational Plans (IEP) or the equivalent for gifted/talented students" (p. 3).

Coleman and Gallagher (1992) reported that 23 (46%) of the state directors of gifted education are housed within the special education division of the state education departments, "ten are placed under curriculum and instruction (20%), and 16 are located in other areas within state organizations" (p. 9). However, only 20 of these 23 states "incorporate gifted students in with their policies for other exceptionalities" (p. 18).

Under the Alaska Administrative Code, each district is required to "establish and implement written procedures for identifying all exceptional children ages 3-21 who reside within the district and who need special education and related services" and set "criteria for determination of eligibility...for special education and related services as a **gifted** child." Arizona defines **exceptional child** to mean "a gifted child or a handicapped child."

Article 12 of the Kansas Administrative Regulations for Special Education includes provisions for the "intellectually gifted," and its *State Plan for Special Education* (1990) encompasses the gifted. Pennsylvania's standards for Special Education Services and Programs includes the "mentally gifted."

Connecticut's *Regulations Concerning Children Requiring Special Education* includes as an "exceptional child" one who

> has extraordinary learning ability or outstanding talent in the creative arts the development of which requires programs or services beyond the level of those ordinarily provided in the regular school programs but which may be provided through special education as part of the public school program.

Although the Connecticut State Department of Education mandates that the local school district provide exceptional children with a full range of special education services, in the case of gifted and talented, many services are optional:

> [E]ach board of education shall be required only to provide identification, referral and evaluation services for gifted and talented children. The provision of all other special education and related services to gifted and talented children shall be at the option of each board of education.

North Carolina's *Procedures Governing Programs and Services for Children With Special Needs* defines such children as including:

> without limitation, all children who because of permanent or temporary mental, physical or emotional handicaps need special education, are unable to have all their educational needs met in a regular class without special education or related services, or are unable to be adequately educated in the public schools. It includes those who are academically gifted, autistic, behaviorally-emotionally handicapped, [and 12 other categories].

Special Education, P.L. 94-142 and the Gifted. Inclusion as an area of exceptionality in special education presumably strengthens a state's policy stance toward the gifted and talented. In some states, this interpretation leads to the incorporation of that population under P.L. 94-142 and insures due process rights to gifted. Coleman and Gallagher observe that "grievance procedures available to students who feel that they have been inappropriately served by the educational system can play an important role in the redress of faulty identification and programming decisions" (p. 18), but that only 27 states currently include due process for gifted students in their policies.

In addition, P.L. 94-142 requires that Individualized Education Programs (IEP) be prepared for each child based on the diagnostic findings of the evaluation or assessment study provided. To meet the requirements of P.L. 94-142, an IEP would be developed or revised providing for each gifted child. While this would be ideal, thus far it has proved problematic for handicapped children and even more so for the gifted.

Philosophy or Rationale

A statement of philosophy expresses a rationale or basis for a state's legislation or regulations. A philosophy may be explicitly stated or, more usually, is only implied. Some state documents contain thoughtfully expressed philosophical statements while others confine themselves to brief rationales.

Despite the importance of a philosophy or rationale, only 18 documents contain statements which can be considered as expressing a conviction or a perspective about the nature of gifted children or their education. Since few states label such statements as "philosophy," it becomes a matter of judgment in determining whether a document does contain a philosophy or rationale concerning the gifted and their education.

Kentucky is one of the few states which opens its *Guidelines for Gifted Education* (1988) with a section titled "Philosophy of Gifted Education" as follows:

> All students shall be provided with an educational program which allows them to develop to their maximum potential. Gifted students possess superior abilities and/or capabilities and, therefore, are a unique segment of Kentucky's school population. In order to realize their potential, they need educational opportunities that differ from those available through the regular school program.
>
> Gifted students exist at all levels of society regardless of sex, race, socio-economic, or ethnic origin. They must be identified through their outstanding intellectual capabilities, academic aptitudes, and/or creative abilities. An articulated K-12 program shall be provided with educational experiences commensurate with their abilities. Such a program shall be conducted in an environment which will make it possible for these students to interact with others of high ability. The program shall afford students the opportunities to reach the highest level of learning and accomplishment of which they are capable at each stage of their development.

Minnesota's *Standards for Services to Gifted and Talented Students* couches the state's philosophy in terms of why appropriate services for the gifted are necessary:

> The differences between gifted and talented students and age-peers in psychological and academic areas have been well documented.... When individual differences are not addressed in the education setting, problems will result. Studies of children with exceptional abilities have shown that these persons typically performed far below their capacity, that they found their experiences frustrating, that developmental disharmonies between high intelligence and adequate physical ability caused problems, and that they often felt inferior, inadequate, and insecure with their peer group....
>
> The highly gifted receive little understanding and emotional support from school and community. The higher the ability, the greater the conflict and inconsistencies between culture and the individual in values, standards, concepts of behavior, and ways of life.
>
> Studies document that there is a continuous and ongoing need for the stimulation of a child's gift if the fit is going to be fully developed. It is believed that insufficient stimulation may result in permanent inability to fully develop the potential....

> In other words, unusual early accomplishment requires something more positive than merely "not interfering" with the development of the gifted child...positive encouragement and training in the demonstrated potential area of giftedness is an absolute necessity.

First issued in 1976 and restated since, the New York State Regents' philosophy has been expressed as follows:

> Because these pupils have the ability to make rich contributions to our culture and society, developing their individual abilities and building on their unique strengths becomes a matter of great importance.
>
> As a group, they constitute an unidentified minority that cuts across all economic, social, racial, and cultural segments of society. They can be found at all ages, in all occupations and in both sexes.
>
> Additionally, it is the position of the Regents that the quality of "giftedness" can occur in varied ways, may emerge at different developmental stages, and must be assessed by trained staff on a periodic basis, K-12.

A very extensive philosophical rationale for gifted education is presented in New Hampshire's programming guidelines:

> Modern educators recognize that the expectations and demands made of today's schools are greater and more important than ever before in our history. As the complexity of our world increases, as the rate of change with which we must cope increases constantly, and as our children and youth face more and more difficult personal, career, and social challenges than any previous generation, the demands on education also increase. We realize today, more than ever, not only that knowledge, but talent, imagination, problem solving, and judgment are qualities far too important in the world of the present and the future to be wasted or unfulfilled.
>
> We recognize the need for talented accomplishments in many areas that will be essential to progress, to the quality of life, and perhaps to survival, and we recognize that schools share in the responsibility for nurturing many and varied dimensions of giftedness, including, for example:
>
> - Science, medicine, technology, and engineering, to find solutions to problems of hunger, disease, and the destruction of our living environment;
> - Leadership, social, and behavioral sciences, and organizations, to solve the problems of justice, equality, diversity, and governance;
> - Arts, culture, and entertainment, to bring us new opportunities and to enhance and celebrate creative expressions that add joy and meaning to life;
> - Ethical, moral, and religious principles and philosophical analysis, to guide individuals and groups in understanding and dealing effectively with the most complex concepts and challenges of human existence;
> - Personal fulfillment, enabling individuals to live in greater mental, emotional, and physical health and to celebrate their own talents as well as those of others.
>
> We may not be sanguine about our ability to assess and select those young people who display the greatest potential for significant accomplishments in these areas, or in any other specific talent dimensions. In truth, these accomplishments often unfold over many years in an individual's life. They are the products of many

complex factors over and beyond one's specific experiences in school. Nonetheless, educators today are rightfully called upon to make every possible effort to discern students' special needs, interests, and potentials, and to provide educational opportunities for their nurture. Increasingly we must deal, then, with the responsibility of serving as important "guardians of the future."

The philosophy of the Texas Board of Education, as expressed in its Administrative Code is as follows:

> Public elementary and secondary education is responsible for providing each student with the development of personal knowledge, skill, and competence to maximum capacity.... Districts must develop their educational programs to insure that appropriate curriculum and learning opportunities are in alignment with the needs, interests, and abilities of all students.
>
> Each district serves a unique population; therefore, variations in the regular program exist from district to district. However, each district, regardless of its size, its wealth, its staff, and its student body has a substantial number of students who have not reached their maximum potential. Included in this group are the gifted who may also be considered at-risk. To ensure appropriate learning opportunities that will foster maximum mental, physical, and emotional development, specialized program services that impact the regular curriculum are essential. It is the district's responsibility to provide such services for gifted students just as they are needed for other students in the district.

The more usual rationale for gifted education found in state documents is much more succinct, such as the following:

> **Delaware:** If Delaware students are to reach their potential, they must be provided educational experiences appropriate to their individual abilities. Gifted and talented students are no exception and also require differentiated instructional and program opportunities to meet their needs and to challenge their abilities.
>
> **Georgia:** There are children and youth in Georgia who demonstrate a high degree of intellectual ability and who need special instruction and/or special ancillary services in order to achieve at levels commensurate with their intellectual abilities.
>
> **Virginia:** Gifted students, who can be found in all ethnic, geographic, and socioeconomic groups in the Commonwealth, represent a valuable, largely untapped natural resource for the state. Gifted students possess talents and abilities that differ from those of their peers to such a degree that differentiated educational programs must be provided to help them grow and develop. Without differentiated educational programs, the superior talents and abilities of many students will remain undeveloped or under-developed.
>
> **Wyoming:** All children and youth in Wyoming need opportunities to develop their individual talents, and the gifted and talented are no exception. The complex nature of giftedness may manifest itself through the interplay of many different intellectual abilities as well as through a variety of creative expression and non-academic talents. Giftedness implies that each gifted child is distinctly different from children in general and from other gifted children, yet their unique abilities and interests are found in every culture, ethnic, and socioeconomic group.

The Importance of a Philosophy. Directly or indirectly, any educational statement or action is driven by the philosophy behind it. The importance of a clear declaration of philosophy is that it lays out clearly the basis for a state's policy—the reason why such a policy needs formulating in the first place. Even if the philosophy is not overtly set forth in a state policy, it may be inferred from the type of mandate and the other program elements or components included in the policy statement. When clearly expressed, the philosophy communicates an unclouded message to educators, parents, and the community of how gifted education is viewed by policymakers.

Definitions of the Gifted and Talented

The definition of the gifted and talented contained in the *Marland Report* and subsequently used in federal legislation was as follows:

> Gifted and talented children are those identified by professionally qualified persons [and] who by virtue of outstanding abilities are capable of high performance. These are children who require differentiated educational programs and services beyond those normally provided by the regular school program in order to realize their contribution to self and society.
>
> Children capable of high performance include those with demonstrated achievement and/or potential ability in any of the following areas: (a) general intellectual ability, (b) specific academic aptitude, (c) creative or productive thinking, (d) leadership ability, (e) visual and performing arts, (f) psychomotor ability.

This definition, known as the "Office of Education definition," has had a significant influence on state definitions of gifted and talented and variations have dominated state definitions. "Psychomotor ability" was removed from the federal definition in 1975. Approved or suggested identification procedures often tend to clarify or delineate the definition.

Coleman and Gallagher (1992) have pointed out that:

> The notion of "potential for giftedness" was introduced in the Marland report...and has played a valuable role in the realization that students may be gifted even if they are not demonstrating their abilities within the school framework. The potential for giftedness was included in 40 state definitions (p. 11).

The Council of State Directors' (1991) study reported that:

> *General intellectual ability* was reported by 46 states to be the *most common area of giftedness identified* in their state's definition. Forty-four states report *specific academic aptitude*, followed by *creative thinking ability* (37 states), *advanced ability in the fine/creative arts* (32 states) and *leadership ability* (26 states). *Psychomotor ability, psychosocial and vocational aptitude* were included in 5 or fewer states (p. 2).

Definitions Focusing on Intellectual or Cognitive Ability: Illustrations of state definitions of giftedness that focus primarily on intellectual ability or learning aptitude follow:

> **Nevada:** "Academically talented" means the possession of outstanding cognitive abilities or the demonstrated capability to perform at a high level in an area of academic achievement.
>
> **Mississippi:** "Gifted children" shall mean children who are found to have an exceptionally high degree of intellect and/or academic ability.
>
> **Arizona:** "Gifted child" means a child of lawful school age who due to superior intellect or advanced learning ability, or both, is not afforded an opportunity for otherwise attainable progress and development in regular classroom instruction and

who needs special instruction or special ancillary services, or both, to achieve levels commensurate with his[her] intellect and ability.

Missouri: Those children who exhibit precocious development of mental capacity and learning potential as determined by competent professional evaluation to the extent that continued educational growth and stimulation could best be served by an academic environment beyond that offered through a standard grade level curriculum,

Pennsylvania: Outstanding intellectual and creative ability the development of which requires special activities or services not ordinarily provided in the regular program. Persons shall be assigned to a program for the gifted when they have an IQ score of 130 or higher. A limited number of persons with an IQ lower than 130 may be admitted to gifted programs when other educational criteria in the person's profile strongly indicate gifted potential...IQ alone shall not determine gifted potential.

Definitions That Encompass More Than Intellectual Ability. Many state definitions go beyond intellectual ability or learning aptitude and include some or all of the other areas cited in the *Marland Report.* Intellectual ability and specific academic aptitude are almost always included in the broader state definitions; leadership and psychomotor ability are seldom included.

Ohio's definition is typical of the adaptation of the Office of Education definition: "The gifted child" is superior in one or more of the following .ypes of ability: superior cognitive ability, specific academic ability, creative thinking ability, visual and/or performing arts ability.

Virginia's definition is unique in that it includes practical arts ability as well as several other "Office of Education" areas:

> "Gifted Students" means those students in kindergarten through grade 12 whose abilities and potential for accomplishments are so outstanding that they require special programs to meet their educational needs. These students will be identified by professionally qualified persons through the use of multiple criteria and having potential or demonstrated abilities and who have evidence of high performance capabilities in one or more of the areas as follows:
>
> 1. General Intellectual Ability
> 2. Specific Academic Ability
> 3. Visual or Performing Arts Ability
> 4. Practical Arts Ability
> 5. Psychosocial Ability
> 6. Creative and Productive Thinking Ability
>
> [The practical arts ability gifted includes] students who excel consistently in the development of a product or performance in any area of vocational education to the extent that they need and can benefit from specifically planned educational services differentiated from those generally provided by the general program experience.

Other illustrations of state definitions which include areas of giftedness in addition to intellectual or cognitive abilities follow:

Minnesota: Gifted and talented children are those who by virtue of outstanding abilities are capable of high performance. These are children whose potentialities can be realized through differentiated educational programs and/or services beyond those normally provided by the regular school program. Children capable of high performance include those with demonstrated achievement or potential in any of the following areas, singly or in combination: general intellectual ability, specific academic aptitude, creative or productive thinking, leadership ability, visual, and performing arts.

Maine: "Gifted and talented children" shall mean those children in grades K-12 who excel, or have potential to excel, beyond their age peers, in the regular school program, to the extent that they need and can benefit from programs for the gifted and talented. Gifted and talented children shall receive specialized instruction through these programs if they have exceptional ability, aptitude, skill or creativity in one or more of the following categories.

1. General Intellectual Ability as shown by demonstrated significant achievement or potential for significant accomplishment above their age peers in all academic areas.
2. Specific Academic Aptitude as shown by demonstrated significant achievement or potential for significant accomplishment above their age peers in one or more academic area(s).
3. Artistic Ability as shown by demonstrated significant achievement or potential for significant accomplishment above their peers in the literary, performing, and/or visual arts.

Maryland: [A gifted child is] an elementary or secondary student who is identified by professionally qualified individuals as having outstanding abilities in the area of:

General intellectual capabilities;
Specific academic aptitudes; or
The creative, visual or performing arts.

A gifted and talented child needs different services beyond those normally provided by the regular school program in order to develop his[her] potential.

Broadening the Definition of Giftedness. Although the Office of Education definition, or elements thereof, figure prominently in many state definitions of giftedness, intellectual ability and academic aptitude still dominate. There are variations in the wording of the legislation, regulations, and guidelines, but exceptional intellectual ability and/or academic achievement is found in almost all state definitions. Coleman and Gallagher (1992) reported that 49 states include intelligence (IQ) and achievement in their definitions and identification procedures (p. 13).

Coleman and Gallagher also found states using definitions involving multiple types of giftedness: "Creativity is included by 40 states, artistic abilities by 34, leadership by 28 states. Fifteen include critical thinking, ten include psychomotor, nine states include psychosocial and four states include an understanding of one's cultural heritage" (p. 13). They observe that "understanding of one's cultural heritage...is considered important when looking for students with significantly different cultural backgrounds" (p. 11).

Programs in many states appear to be beginning to adopt versions of Gardner's seven multiple intelligences, Sternberg's triarchic model, and other theories or broadened conceptions of giftedness, although these have not found their way into state policies as yet.

Identification Procedures

Identification is, of course, related to definition. Policies regarding identification procedures range from required standards to guidelines or suggestions to very detailed specification of instruments that local districts may use in identifying gifted and talent students as defined by the state legislation or regulation. Several states specify procedures and instruments for identifying gifted youngsters who are disadvantaged—"economically, culturally and/or environmentally." A few deal with artistic or performing arts talent.

Coleman and Gallagher (1992) note that 34 states advocate the use of multiple criteria in identifying gifted students. Although most include individual or group intelligence tests and achievement tests, other instruments or procedures may also be included. A number of states require or suggest that the identification process be conducted in two or three stages such as screening, identification, and placement. Coleman and Gallagher report that 43 states "have policies directly related to the screening process and other states mention the option of local districts to implement screening procedures" (p. 13). Sixteen states include pre-kindergarten screening and continuous K-12 screening is mentioned by 45 states.

Recommended Standards and Guidelines for Identification. Some states suggest standards or guidelines regarding identification of gifted and talented students. For example, Colorado's guidelines recommend that local districts incorporate standards for referral and assessment into their program plans:

> **Referral and Assessment:** It is recommended that students be referred for assessment by a variety of methods, such as parent nominations, teacher nominations, self nominations, peer nominations, scores on group tests of intelligence, product evaluations. Comprehensive and multiple criteria including tests of intellectual ability, achievement tests, teacher checklists, parent checklists, creative performance, grades, and product evaluations should be used for identification purposes. It is recommended that no student be denied the opportunity for needed programming on the basis of any one assessment criterion. It is recommended that specific plans be developed to ensure the identification of subpopulations of gifted and talented: minorities, girls, underachievers, highly gifted, and learning disabled and/or handicapped. Logical connections must be demonstrated between any diagnostic test administered, the areas of perceived educational need and programming delivered. Student learning plans based on assessed needs may be developed.

Arkansas's *gifted program approval standards* require that identification be a continuing process:

> Identification of gifted/talented students is an ongoing process extending from school entry through grade twelve.
>
> Opportunities are provided for students to be considered for placement in gifted/talented programs throughout their school experience.
>
> A review of students' placement in the gifted/talented program is made annually.
>
> Written policies for exit from a program are developed and implemented.

Records of placement decisions and data on all nominated students are kept on file for a minimum of five years or for as long as needed for educational decisions.

California's standards are of a more general nature and are couched in terms of principles to be observed, making each school district responsible for the development of a method for the identification:

a. Standards shall ensure the identification of pupils who possess a capacity for excellence far beyond that of their chronological peers.
b. Methods shall be designed to seek out and identify those pupils whose extraordinary capacities require special services and programs.
c. Provisions shall be made for examining a pupil's range of capacities.
d. Methods and techniques of identification shall generate information as to a pupil's capacities and needs.
e. There shall be equal opportunity to be identified in the categories served.
f. Methods shall be designed to seek out and identify gifted and talented pupils from varying linguistic, economic, and cultural backgrounds.

Maine provides local school districts "with practical guidelines and advice that may assist them in implementing the procedures for identification" in accordance with the "components and characteristics of an identification process which are required by Chapter 104, Educational Programs for Gifted and Talented Children...." Maine's guidelines suggest a two-step process consisting of screening and selection. Screening requires "at least one objective measure...for both general intellectual ability and specific academic aptitude." Following a discussion of intelligence tests in general including the "many complex issues surrounding the use and misuse of IQ tests," the strengths and weaknesses of such "objective measurements" as group and individual IQ tests, aptitude tests, and achievement tests are discussed with alternative methods proposed for grades K-2. The strengths and weaknesses of subjective measures—"'subjective' in the sense that the instruments used to gather such information do not claim to have statistical objectivity (e.g., validity and reliability), which standardized measures have"—are presented. These include: teacher checklists, parent referral, peer referrals, referrals by others (e.g., community members) and pupil products and performances.

Specified Instruments and Procedures for Identification. Some states are quite specific in terms of suggestions or requirements regarding the instruments and procedures local districts may use in identifying gifted and talented. Those statements often list specific standardized tests or other instruments.

For example, Arkansas's program standards detail what must be incorporated in each district's written identification procedures, including:

Use of at least two objective and two subjective measures (one of which must assess creativity), chosen from the following:

Objective	Subjective
Standardized mental ability test	Behavioral checklists (Parent and/or teacher)
Standardized achievement test	Rating scales
Test of creative ability	Evaluations of products
	Student interviews
	Biographical interviews
	Grades
	Auditions

Considerable specification is found in the Alabama *Administrative Policy Manual* that states:

Each public education agency's Eligibility Determination Committee shall determine the student's eligibility for the gifted program and provide written notice to the parents regarding the decision.

A student may be determined eligible for the gifted program when he/she has attained:

A. A full scale score of 130 on the Wechsler Tests-Revised Version, 132 on the Stanford-Binet (Form L-M, 1972), or 130 on the Kaufman Assessment Battery for Children.

B. An equivalent score on one of the approved adapted tests for special populations [e.g., an adapted version of the Wechsler Tests, Stanford-Binet, the Hiskey-Nebraska, Raven's Progressive Matrices, or Leiter]. An equivalent score shall be considered of at least two standard deviations above the mean on the population on which the test was standardized.

C. Outstanding academic achievement on an instrument [i.e., out-of-level test scores on instruments such as Scholastic Aptitude Test, Sequential Tests of Educational Progress (STEP), etc.]. This shall apply to those students whose individual intelligence test score is below 130 or 132, but within the standard error of measurement for the instrument administered.

D. In the area of creative/productive thinking, two (2) sets of scores must be considered

   1. A score of 120 on the Stanford-Binet (Revised), Wechsler Scales (Revised), Kaufman Assessment Battery for Children, or an equivalent score on one of the approved adopted tests for special aptitudes.
   2. On the Torrance Tests of Creative Thinking. Figural Form A or B, the creative index score must be 130; and on the Verbal Form A or B, the score must be 65 (average of the t scores derived from three tests).

E. For students who qualify on the Gifted Checklist as disadvantaged, the score on the intelligence test shall be one standard deviation unit above the mean. A score of seven (7) or more on part one and a score of forty (40) on part three of the checklist would indicate that the student is economically, culturally and/or environmentally disadvantaged.

Identification of Artistically and Creatively Gifted. Thirty-four states reported that they had policies regarding identification of artistic giftedness and 40 states included creativity (Coleman & Gallagher, 1992, p. 14).

The three areas of exceptionality for which Maine schools are required to provide special programming encompass general intellectual ability, specific academic aptitude and "artistic ability in the literary, performing and/or visual arts." The document states that since "few objective measures exist for various artistic areas of exceptionality," none is required. In identifying exceptionality in the arts, Maine's schools are urged to reflect on "the fact that technical skills are but a part of overall artistic ability. Creativity, sensitivity, and original insights are also aspects of this gift, as well as problem-solving ability and a capacity for critical thinking." Maine's guidelines for the arts follow:

> **For Artistic Ability:** The screening procedure shall include three measures chosen from the following:
>
> 1. Pupil products, such as auditions, portfolios, works-in-progress, performance
> 2. Pupil interview
> 3. Teacher referral
> 4. Referrals by professional artist(s) based on analysis of pupil work
> 5. Self-referral
> 6. Referral by parents, peers, members of the community
> 7. Other appropriate measures that have received prior approval from the Commissioner

Identification of Students From Special Populations. Coleman and Gallagher (1992) reported that 38 states include "references to culturally diverse populations, economically disadvantaged students, and disabled students" (p. 11).

The State of Arizona has responsibility for adopting a list of approved tests that "shall provide separate scores for quantitative reasoning, verbal reasoning, and non-verbal reasoning and shall be capable of providing reliable and valid scores at the highest ranges of the score distribution." However, the tests or subtests must be ones "that are demonstrated to be effective with special populations including those with handicapping conditions or difficulty with the English language."

Florida's guide, *Participation of Students from Under-represented Groups in Gifted Programs*, is aimed at assisting schools develop the components of their district plans that will help identify and nurture underrepresented groups—defined as those "whose racial/ethnic backgrounds are other than white, non-Hispanic, or who are limited English proficient, or who are from a low socio-economic status family." The State Board changed a rule concerning eligibility that aims at allowing "students who are members of under-represented groups to participate in gifted programs using a district-developed identification plan." Asserting that "input from regular and gifted classroom teachers, parents, and student peers are most effective when the respective learning partners are sensitized to both the needs and characteristics of the underrepresented and the school culture," behavioral checklists of characteristics are provided as the basis for referral. Florida's guidelines follow:

> The school district's student evaluation procedures follow those set out in the Special Programs and Procedures document, special programs for gifted section. Evaluations must be administered by qualified evaluation specialists as indicated in the document. In addition, districts are requested to identify the measurement

instruments to be used in four areas of potential performance: leadership, motivation, academic performance, and creativity.

Instruments which could be used to measure creativity are

- *Group Inventory for Finding Creative Talent*
- *Matrix Analogies Test*
- *Ravens' Progression Matrices Test*
- *Torrance Test of Creative Thinking*

Motivation and leadership are often assessed through alternative testing such as portfolios, observations, interviews, and community and family involvement data. Instruments which were used in the Gifted and Talented Field Test Identification Project, and which could be used to measure leadership and motivation, are

- *Scales for Rating Behavioral Characteristics of Superior Children*
- *Gifted and Talented Screening Form*
- *Preschool Talent Checklist*
- *Biographical Inventory*
- *Peer Nominations*

Instruments which could be used to measure achievement with underrepresented groups are

- *Columbia Mental Measurement Scale*
- *Differential Ability Scales*
- *Kaufman Assessment Battery for Children*
- *Kranz Multidimension Screening Device*
- *Peabody Picture Vocabulary Test*
- *Structure of the Intellect*
- *System of Multi Pluralistic Assessment*

Strong Policies Regarding the Identification Process. New Hampshire's planning guidelines provide a useful perspective on identification:

> Rather than labeling some individuals as "gifted" (hence, implying that all others are non-gifted) we believe identification should be positive, dynamic, flexible, inclusive (not exclusive), and ongoing. Identification is a process which helps us better to recognize students' characteristics so we can plan instruction more effectively.

Just as there are variations in states' definitions of giftedness, there is diversity in the identification procedures recommended or required. A definition that encompasses multiple types of giftedness necessitates more complex identification techniques and procedures than a narrower definition. Definitions that screen for and identify students with giftedness other than intellectual and academic abilities require procedures that may rely more on performance and products than on standardized tests. A state's policies that limit the percentage or number of students who can be served place restrictions on the instruments that can be employed. States vary in the extent to which they provide broad guidelines or structured requirements.

A strong state policy on identification would provide both flexibility and guidance for the local school district. Guidance could come from requiring districts to think about the broad spectrum of techniques and instruments that might be used to screen for a range

of potential abilities. Flexibility would encourage decisions to be made on the basis of local populations. For those districts that are considering newer theories of the nature of giftedness, the state's policies should enable them to use alternative approaches to the screening and selection processes. A policy on identification should require districts to explore and apply procedures for identifying students from underserved populations—the handicapped, the disadvantaged, and minority groups. A robust state policy would make clear that the identification process is an ongoing, continuous one and not a single-shot event. A policy statement should make clear the due process rights screening and identification should entail—detailed specifications or broad suggestions for due process rights and appeal procedures, record keeping and monitoring, qualified personnel to be involved, and screening committees. Finally, a state identification policy should protect the individual student's needs against a district's bureaucracies.

Programs for the Gifted and Talented

"Program for the Gifted" has many different meanings in state legislation and regulation. In some instances, program encompasses everything that has to do with the gifted, including definition, identification, instruction, organization, evaluation, and funding. In others, program refers primarily to the instructional aspects, the arrangement of teaching and learning conditions.

States vary widely with respect to the program elements required or suggested, although there appears to be consensus that programs should be developed locally according to the needs of the population of a particular school community. States vary in the elements with which they choose to deal—some stressing program parts such as rationale, goals, objectives, teaching methods, and evaluation plans, while others choose to highlight grouping structures or early admission provisions. Part- or full-time classes, magnet schools, cluster grouping, resource rooms, special classes, Advanced Placement Program, International Baccalaureate, independent study, summer and out-of-school classes, and counseling or guidance programs are found in state legislation or regulations. Some states encourage or even require accelerated programs while others permit it. Individual Education Plans (IEPs) or the equivalent for students identified as gifted may constitute a program in some states. Programs for the gifted must be approved by some state departments, sometimes in the form of a detailed plan, while others have few or no requirements. Some policies make little distinction between "curriculum" and "program"; other states call for an unspecified "differentiated curriculum."

Individualized Education Programs (IEPs). In a dozen states, IEPs or their equivalents must be developed and implemented for each gifted student (Council of State Directors, 1991, p. 3). Based on P.L. 94-142, Arkansas's regulations mandate that: "Each school district shall initiate and conduct a child study team to develop, review, and revise a written individualized education program (IEP) for each child who is eligible for services."

Alabama's policy requires the development of an IEP that contains the type of program option, goals and objectives, and related services the local district will provide and indicates the "educational environment where the student can benefit from a program option consistent with his/her needs...the least restrictive environment [i.e., regular school program] as determined by the IEP Committee." However, the local school district "may cooperate with post-secondary institutions or other entities in making optional programs available for consideration."

Broad or General Policies on Programs for the Gifted. In Illinois: " 'Gifted Education Program' means those instructional programs, supportive services, unique materials, learning settings, and other state and local educational services...which modify, supplement, and support the standard education program of the public schools."

In providing "5 Simple Rules for Planning Program and Services" in its *Oregon Handbook for Parents of Talented and Gifted Children*, the Department of Education lays out some uncomplicated ideas about programming.

1. Gifted children should be viewed as individuals, not as THE GIFTED, each of whom has a unique pattern of abilities and interests that need to be nurtured.

2. Gifted children should spend at least a part of their time with others of similar ability and interests. This avoids possible social-emotional problems of isolation and feeling different.
3. Gifted children should work in basic skills such as reading and math at their level of ability. That is, they should move as fast and as far as they are able. Boredom with unchallenging work may cause frustrations resulting in gifted children being at risk.
4. Gifted children should be allowed to investigate, in depth, areas in which they are greatly interested and should be encouraged to do original, creative work.
5. Gifted children may need counseling and guidance, whether from a counselor or from their classroom teachers, to optimize their potential.

The handbook briefly describes and discusses instructional and organizational model options available to schools. Instructional models, e.g., Continuous Progress Model, Enrichment Triad Model, and the Autonomous Learner Model, "are devised to assist educators as they guide student learning from point A to point Z in a sensible progression, making sure that the goals of the instruction are met." Organizational models, e.g., various kinds of options within the regular classroom or within the school building or district or outside the district, "are concerned not only with instruction but also with the articulation of all parts of the instruction." The handbook informs parents that the Oregon mandate "allows teachers, schools, or entire school districts to set up instructional options for students..."

New Hampshire's planning guidelines present this perspective on programming for the gifted:

> This should lead to modifications of instructional activities and services based on students' unique characteristics and needs. We affirm that outstanding potentials among students, which may lead to gifted behaviors, create the need for experiences and services extending beyond the regular program, and that such needs should be recognized and met by systematic and deliberate programming in school....
>
> Effective programming is concerned with expanding or enhancing learning opportunities for all students. Developing and fulfilling students' strengths and talents is accomplished through a wide variety of opportunities and experiences. The regular school program serves as a foundation upon which many activities and options can build, and in many cases must also be augmented through additional opportunities and experiences.

Oklahoma's rules and regulations make the local board responsible for providing gifted and talented students with unspecified differentiated instruction and support services:

> "Gifted child educational programs" means those special instructional programs, supportive services, unique educational materials, learning settings, and other educational services which differentiate, supplement and support the regular program in meeting the needs of the gifted child...
>
> School districts shall provide differentiated education for all identified gifted students. This differentiated education will include multiple program operation which shall be carefully matched with students' needs and interests....

Oklahoma's regulations then list 24 "options for providing differentiated education" which may be used, including, but not limited to, such provisions as enrichment of content, credit by examination, acceleration, flexible pacing, grade skipping, and a final option labeled "Other."

Ohio's *Rule for School Foundations for Gifted Children*, lists a number of optional supportive services and experiences as "some ways to serve gifted students as part of the regular educational program," noting that "the program shall reflect the criteria used in determining eligibility." Included are the following:

1. Accelerated educational experiences:

    a. Early entrance;
    b. Grade acceleration;
    c. Curriculum compacting, allowing children to complete more than one grade level in a given year;
    d. Advanced subject matter programs;
    e. Early graduation; and
    f. Concurrent enrollment at another school or training agency. (Educational options preclude a student receiving high school and college credit for the same work if such credit is within the required eighteen units for graduation.)

2. Special experiences:

    a. Topic seminars;
    b. Independent study and research;
    c. Mentorships, internships, and other intensive work with experts in a given field of study; and
    d. Visual and/or performing arts experiences, including appreciation.

3. Guidance services:

    a. Personal/social awareness and adjustment;
    b. Academic planning and performance; and
    c. Vocational and career awareness, investigation and planning.

4. Organization options:

    a. Clustering within the classroom;
    b. Resource room; and
    c. Self-contained classroom.

Georgia's regulations assert that "because of the nature of programs and the varying needs of gifted students, a local school system should use a combination of delivery models in providing service." Three delivery models—self-contained classroom, resource, and facilitator—are presented. In the Facilitator Delivery Model,

> a teacher of the gifted works with a student to design an appropriate program of study utilizing the expertise of other personnel and/or community resources. Such a program shall require a written contract which describes the objective(s), activities, product(s) and contract time (segments) requirements to be completed during the contract period. The facilitator model is utilized in any of the following methods [intern/mentor program, joint enrollment in college or university course,

independent study or Advanced Placement Program], which shall meet local and state board policies.

To receive State Aid Funds to develop comprehensive programming for the gifted and talented in Michigan, "a 3-5 year plan must be submitted which addresses areas of planning and administrative activities, staff development, identification, defined program, and evaluation." The defined program requires the district to begin with "a plan to modify curriculum and instruction in the student's regular or full-time classroom"; make available "a variety of curricular and extra-curricular options that provide enrichment and counseling and guidance (academic, career, and personal)...to encourage individual exploration, development, and acceptance of talents"; and "describes local program options and [explains] how the program provides a challenging and quality curriculum for the target population."

The Texas State Plan and Guidelines for the Education of the Gifted/Talented addresses "Program Organization" in terms of organizational patterns or "program prototypes...[that] include three basic elements of enrichment: grouping, acceleration, and guidance."

> The goals and student objectives of each program guide the choice of prototype. In any one district, several different prototypes may be developed at different sites or grade level ranges....It is important to keep in mind that the gifted program is not isolated from the existing school curriculum, but is a logical extension of it....

Different prototype options discussed include: kindergarten and/or primary grade talent pool, cluster grouping within the regular or honors class, honors classes specifically for the gifted, resource rooms, mentoring programs, concurrent enrollment in colleges and/or universities and high school seminar programs. Two principles that should guide program organization are offered:

> **Principle I:** Program organizational patterns that are developed to serve the gifted/talented students are compatible with the district's philosophy, goals, and objectives and are described in the district plan and/or campus improvement plans.
>
> **Principle II:** Program organizational patterns that are developed promote differentiated learning experiences for gifted/talented students.

Criteria and Standards for Programming. Rhode Island's regulations present school districts with a set of "Criteria for Program" to be applied in their planning:

A. Each program shall have written long-range goals and objectives.
B. As far as possible each program should be available on a systemwide basis at the minimum in order to guarantee comparable services regardless of a selected student's individual school attendance area.
C. Program objectives, activities, experiences, and administrative arrangements, such as independent study, seminars, peer tutoring, special classes, resource rooms, accelerated groups within a regular class, learning environments outside the classroom/school setting, etc. Shall be identifiably different from those provided in the standard school program and shall accommodate the special needs of individual students selected for the program.
D. Students shall be involved in a program or service for a sufficient length of the regularly scheduled school time to assure that the activities will have a significant and measurable effect.

E. Each program shall provide adequate space for classroom instruction and program experiences. Facilities shall accommodate the special characteristics of the student program.

F. Each program shall design and implement plans for:

1. Ongoing evaluation of each student's progress.
2. Annual re-evaluation of each student's eligibility for participation.
3. Coordination of program activities with those of the standard school program.
4. Assessing and addressing staff development needs.
5. Assessing the extent to which the program goals and objectives were achieved.
6. Assessing the needs to provide additional services.
7. Acquainting parents of participating students with the objectives and purposes of the program and providing them with general information about the needs of gifted and talented children.

G. Each program shall assure that appropriate records of attendance, evaluation, suspension or withdrawal, and fiscal matters be maintained.

California's regulations (Title 5A) provide a set of general standards that apply to all types of gifted and talented programs. These are as follows:

a. Unique opportunities for high-achieving and under-achieving pupils who are identified as gifted and talented shall be provided.
b. Districts shall make provisions for ensuring participation of pupils in the upper range of intellectual ability.
c. Districts shall make provisions for ensuring full participation of pupils from disadvantaged and varying cultural backgrounds.
d. The quality of existing programs for gifted and talented pupils shall be maintained and/or improved.
e. Experimentation with a variety of programmatic approaches and cost levels shall be encouraged.
f. Written consent of a parent, guardian, or other person having actual custody and control of the pupil shall be on file with the district prior to the pupil's participation in the program.
g. The district program shall meet the specific needs and requirements, as specified in Education Code Section 52200(c) of gifted and talented pupils. Academic components shall be included in all program offerings.
h. The district shall reflect the assessed needs of its identified pupils.
i. All identified gifted and talented pupils shall have an opportunity to participate in the gifted and talented program.
j. The district shall develop a written plan for the district program which shall be available for public inspection....

California's regulations also describe a variety of types of program options that schools may provide including: a special day class; part-time grouping; enrichment activities; cluster grouping; independent study; acceleration; postsecondary education opportunities; services for underachieving gifted and talented pupils; services for linguistically diverse, culturally divergent and/or economically disadvantaged gifted and talented pupils; special counseling or instructional activity or seminars carried on during or outside the regular school day; and other services or activities approved 90 days in advance by the Superintendent of Public Instruction. California's school districts must "file

applications with the Superintendent of Public Instruction by June 15 of the preceding school year for prior approval of proposed programs for the next school year."

In its *Rules for Educational Programs for Gifted and Talented Pupils*, the State of Utah requires each school district to develop a plan that must be submitted to the state department for annual review.

The district program shall contain provisions to:

1. develop a written philosophy for the education of gifted and talented students that is consistent with the goals and values of the school district and community;
2. select a district coordinator who is responsible for the program;
3. recognize a variety of areas in which a student may be identified as gifted;
4. provide carefully integrated, and articulated curricula throughout the district;
5. identify and use teaching strategies that are appropriate to the learning styl[illegible] and emotional needs of gifted and talented students;
6. adopt flexible pacing at all levels and allow students to advance as they master content and skills;
7. offer program options that reach through and beyond the normal institutional boundaries: across disciplines, across grade levels, across levels of intelligence;
8. provide guidance to assist students in addressing personal and interpersonal needs, in program selection, and in career and college choices;
9. balance acceleration with enrichment activities for diverse types and degrees of intelligence;
10. provide information regarding special services, programs, and other appropriate educational opportunities; and
11. utilize appropriate community and private resources.

Strengthening State Policies Regarding Program. As indicated above, as used in state policy documents, the term "program for the gifted" ranges from including everything that has to do with educating gifted students from definition to evaluation to dealing with only the instructional aspects.

There are many extant models for educating the gifted, some more comprehensive than others. No single model has been accepted as "the model" a state should impose on its local school districts. Every state provides flexibility to local districts to implement policies regarding programs for the gifted. Some, however, are so open-ended as to simply recommend or suggest that the local district provide "differentiated education for identified gifted and talented."

A state's policy would be strengthened if it set standards for program planning that would guide local implementation efforts and, as do some states, make funding contingent on meeting those standards. Such standards would delineate the program elements to which the local district must attend, provide suggestions for optional means for meeting those standards, and indicate the state's commitment to helping local districts design and implement programs for the gifted. Such standards should make clear the flexibility provided the local district with respect to program differentiation—that is, the leeway granted in deviating from the regular program requirements. Such standards should encourage local districts to plan programs that provide for newer and broader conceptions of giftedness and talent. A strong state policy must treat issues regarding curriculum and instruction in a clear and direct way. This is the focus of the next section.

Differentiated Curriculum and Instruction

Although curriculum and instruction are at the heart of programming for the gifted, there is little specificity or guidance in the treatment of the topic in state documents. Many state policies refer to, advocate, or mandate "differentiated curriculum" or "appropriate curriculum" but usually give little indication of what is intended or what is required. States often use the terms program, curriculum, and instruction interchangeably. Policies regarding curriculum and instruction tend to be more general than detailed. Few documents deal specifically with aspects of curricular goals and objectives, curriculum content, instructional strategies, pacing, and program outcomes. Some state documents relate curriculum for the gifted to the regular curriculum, indicating ways differentiation should be provided.

The State of Washington's policy, for example, states that local districts should provide appropriate educational opportunities, taking into account limits on available resources.

> Each student selected as a highly capable student shall be provided an educational opportunity which takes into account such student's unique needs and capabilities. Such program shall recognize the limits of the resources provided by the state and the program options available in the district, including programs in adjoining districts and public institutions of higher education. Districts shall keep on file a description of the educational program provided for each student.

Relating Curriculum to Regular Curriculum Requirements. Some state policies refer to the common or basic curriculum for all students and require that the gifted achieve mastery as well. Those states may also urge differentiation beyond the basic curriculum.

Oregon's regulations require that the local district provide instruction that will enable students to achieve the Common Curriculum Goals the State Board has set. At the elementary level, local districts are required to:

1. Instruct all students in kindergarten in a planned program that emphasizes the physical, social, emotional, and cognitive development of young children.
2. Instruct all students in grades K/1 through 6 leading to the achievement of common curriculum goals expected of all Oregon students as adopted by the State Board of Education in the areas of art, health education, language arts (including reading and writing), mathematics, music, physical education, science, and social studies (including geography and history).
3. Instruct all students in grades 7 and 8 leading to achievement of common curriculum goals expected of all Oregon students as adopted by the State Board of Education in the areas of health education, language arts (including reading and writing), mathematics, physical education, science, and social studies (including geography and history).
4. Provide elective classes available for instruction in the fine and/or applied arts in at least grade 7 or 8.
5. Instruct all students in grades K through 8 in a planned program that shall provide them with the knowledge and skills necessary for successful progress in high school.

At the high school level, Oregon requires that districts provide instructional opportunities that will enable students "to acquire knowledge and skills consistent with the Common Curriculum Goals" and "with elective educational opportunities in applied arts, fine arts, foreign language and vocational education, sufficient to meet graduation requirements."

Georgia's curriculum policy stipulates that:

> Gifted curricula shall incorporate the 76 student competencies and State Board of Education approved curriculum, resource guides and courses. The Skills Areas Basic to Gifted Education shall be incorporated at each grade grouping into one or more of the following content areas: language arts, mathematics, foreign language, social studies and science. These skills shall not be presented as independent curricula....The Skills Areas Basic to Gifted Education include—Area I: Cognitive Skills, Area II: Learning Skills, Area III: Research and Reference Skills and Area IV: Communication Skills.

Local school districts are required by the State Department of Arizona "to develop a scope and sequence for...curriculum modifications...to ensure that gifted pupils receive special education commensurate with their academic abilities and potentials." The local district's annual report must:

> Include an explanation of how special education for the gifted differs from regular education in such areas as:
>
> a. Content, including broad based interdisciplinary curriculum.
> b. Process, including higher level thinking skills.
> c. Product, including variety and complexity.
> d. Learning environment, including flexibility.

Arkansas has established "minimum standards for approval of programs which will meet requirements of the Standards of Accreditation" and the funding programs for the gifted. Its standards provide broad guidance for curriculum as follows:

> Curriculum for the gifted extends or replaces the regular curriculum.
>
> Curriculum is differentiated in content, process, and/or product.
>
> 1. Content is differentiated in breadth or depth, in tempo or pace, and/or in kind.
> 2. Processes for gifted students stress creativity and higher level thinking skills.
> 3. Students investigate problems in depth and develop products which are communicated to appropriate audiences.
>
> Curriculum has scope and sequence to assure continuity.
>
> Guidelines for evaluation of materials and resources for the gifted are established and used in selecting those appropriate for differentiated learning.

The *Virginia Plan for the Gifted* suggests that instructional programs should "reflect local goals and objectives, should be sequential and continuous, and should demonstrate a depth of content." The document advises:

The curriculum should not consist of disjointed, time-consuming activities added to the regular curriculum. Differentiation of the curriculum is applicable to academic, vocational, and visual and performing arts courses, as well as to skill areas: e.g., leadership skills. The curriculum should include a balance of content and process and should emphasize the skills of analysis and synthesis, and evaluation. The curriculum should be balanced and should reflect an awareness of the students' physical, social, and intellectual maturity.

School divisions should concentrate their energies on integrating differentiated programs for gifted students into the core curriculum. These programs should be sequential, should demonstrate depth of content and should be continuous.

Individualized Education Programs (IEPs). West Virginia's policy is linked to the design of an Individualized Education Program as follows:

a. The major goal of a gifted program is to provide the instruction and assistance necessary to increase the student's cognitive and affective functioning toward higher academic achievement and educational performance.
b. The gifted program includes four (4) major curricular components: basic annual goals and instructional objectives, extended annual goals and instructional objectives, process skills, and skills in understanding self and society.
c. Programmatic focus, as addressed in the Individualized Education Program, is on task commitment, metacognitive skills, content complexity, content enrichment, and integration into appropriate instructional settings.
d. In the student's identified areas of academic strengths, acceleration shall be a primary programmatic consideration.
e. When acceleration is the primary focus of a gifted student's program, the IEP Committee shall specify in the IEP how and when the student will complete the necessary credits for high school graduation.

Curricular Guidance for Local School Districts. Some states do urge local districts to go beyond the basic regular curriculum requirements without, however, setting standards or principles. The local school district is, in effect, required to design a "differentiated curriculum" with a minimum of guidance from the state.

For example, Wyoming's state plan states that a "wide variety of instructional alternatives should be available to students with special abilities" and that:

Critical to programming needs, the gifted require differentiated curriculum with corresponding instructional strategies. This differentiation should include:

1. Instruction based on a differentiated curriculum which denotes higher cognitive concepts and processes.
2. Instructional strategies that accommodate the learning styles of gifted and talented students and curriculum content.
3. Special administrative procedures and grouping arrangements to facilitate the desired instruction.
4. Special administrative procedures to accommodate off-campus and other non-traditional learning arrangements.
5. Special administrative procedures to accommodate such student needs as artistic talent, musical ability, and leadership potential.

More detailed guidance is provided by the State of Delaware whose policy has set 11 program standards. One standard requires each local district to have "written curricula which differentiate the gifted program(s) and which contain instructional objectives designed to meet identified needs." The five components of that standard include:

A. The curriculum engages students in activities which require higher level thinking skills (interpretation, application, analysis, synthesis, and evaluation).
B. The curriculum is interdisciplinary and global in nature.
C. The curriculum is flexible, allowing for diverse student experiences.
D. The curriculum allows students to pursue their individual interests and stimulates them in the development of new interests or fields of study.
E. The curriculum fosters creativity and specific problem-solving approaches and activities.

Two other Delaware program standards are also related to curriculum—one to learning activities which should be "designed to accomplish the instructional objectives of the gifted curriculum" and the other to the classroom management and climate/atmosphere which should be "conducive to learning and positive human interaction." The two components of the "learning activities" standard are:

A. Activities and instruction are adapted to student learning styles, using a wide variety of methods and materials designed to promote productive thinking, learning concepts and generalizations, and complex thinking.
B. Activities are both competitive and cooperative, reflecting an appropriate balance of each.

The two components of classroom "climate/atmosphere" standard consist of the following:

A. The classroom climate affirms diversity; individual differences are positively valued.
B. The classroom climate conveys to students that learning is valued and intelligence/talents are respected.

Idaho's resource manual refers to instructional models consisting of a team-teaching approach, a consultative approach, a pull-out program and curriculum adaptations. Curriculum adaptations are described as follows:

Curriculum Adaption allows adjustments to be made in a student's standard curriculum in order to accommodate his/her learning style or rate.

a. Compacting refers to an instructional strategy where the student is able to eliminate a great deal of busy work and, when mastery is demonstrated, move on to the next level.
b. Supplemental materials may provide opportunities for enriching the child in the regular program. Such materials should involve higher level thinking skills rather than drill and practice activities.
c. Differentiated curriculum materials involve higher cognitive abilities and deal with topics and strategies that are not typically taught in the traditional classroom.

The important consideration is that flexibility be allowed for the program. Whether in the regular classroom, learning center, resource room or library, independent

study periods should provide sufficient time for the student to complete a project or activity.

Indiana's regulations concerning the curriculum require that:

> A state approved gifted and talented curriculum must be articulated in grades K through 12 to ensure an appropriate and logical sequence of content, process and product. It must be appropriately modified from the standard school program in the following areas: (1) goals and objectives; (2) content; (3) process; (4) product; (5) environment; (6) pace; and/or (7) level.

Although the gifted are included in its special education regulations, Kansas's *Supplement for Gifted Programs* calls for programs for the gifted to provide:

> a qualitatively differentiated curriculum, including a core of subject matter which all students are expected to learn in addition to other subject matter unique to the program for gifted learners. Gifted children and youth must be given the opportunity to learn more in both quantitative and qualitative terms. The program should emphasize:
>
> 1. Opportunities for the development of research skills,
> 2. Availability and variety of learning options,
> 3. Student-directed learning experiences,
> 4. Accommodation to creative learning styles,
> 5. Depth and breadth of learning experiences,
> 6. Inquiry training,
> 7. Problem-solving techniques, and
> 8. Individual projects which result in products superior to those normally expected of age peers.
>
> Programs for the gifted shall also provide curricular options and/or opportunities to explore and participate in a variety of nonacademic learning experiences. Learners displaying interests and/or skills in a wide variety of activities outside the regular curriculum must be given sufficient opportunity to investigate and explore those interest areas.
>
> Each gifted child shall be permitted to test out of, or work at an individual rate, and receive credit for required or prerequisite courses, or both, at all grade levels if so specified in that child's individualized education program.
>
> Gifted students may receive credit for college study at the college or high school level or may receive dual credit therefore. If any gifted student chooses to receive college credit, the student shall be responsible for the college tuition costs.

As a first step toward curricular differentiation, North Carolina recommends a review of the general K-12 curriculum "to determine how the basic skills and concepts can be compressed and integrated to accommodate the faster learning pace of gifted students," setting the stage for a focus on:

- accelerated or advanced content that matches the students' mental age rather than their chronological age;
- learning experiences that require higher level thinking skills (e.g., analyzing, synthesizing, evaluating, etc.);

- content that is related to broad-based issues, themes, or problems and possibly integrates more than one content area;
- abstract ideas, theories, and concepts within the content that require critical thinking to give them meaning;
- the development of students' self-understanding of their abilities and how to use them.

Content modifications alone do not guarantee a gifted program that is appropriate for the needs and abilities of identified students. Of equal importance are the use of (l) theoretical models that help organize the content approach and (2) good teaching strategies that indicate an understanding of the characteristics of gifted students.

New York State's guidelines for local districts assert that curriculum and instruction provisions should attend to the affective as well as the cognitive needs of gifted students who should be offered opportunities to:

- Acquire basic skills
- Explore ideas and issues at their own paces and levels
- Foster cognitive and affective growth through the use of native and acquired languages
- Satisfy their unusually high desire for self-fulfillment
- Find productive ways to express their unusual multiple talents and high capacity for versatility
- Receive special guidance in making choices and plans appropriate to their different rates of personal growth and development
- Be exposed to a wide variety of learning experiences in and out of the formal school setting
- Express themselves creatively through the arts: fine, performing, visual, language, home, and industrial
- Develop a perception of their giftedness in relation to their own personal career needs as well as their responsibilities to society
- Apply their giftedness to both theoretical and practical problem solving situations
- Develop realistic and healthy self concepts

The New York State regulations also mandate that eighth grade students who have demonstrated readiness "shall have the opportunity to take high school courses in Regents mathematics and in at least one of the following areas: English, social studies, second language, art, music, occupational education subjects, Regents science courses" and be awarded high school credit for such courses. In high school, the student may receive up to 6 1/2 units of credit by taking a state-approved or state-developed examination and achieving a score of 85 percent.

Minnesota's standards provide six criteria which may be used to evaluate **curriculum-based services** for gifted and talented students:

1. The students' curriculum is compacted for accelerated learners.
2. Students are encouraged to pursue their personal interests and are stimulated to develop new interests or fields of study.
3. Students are engaged in learning strategies which emphasize advanced thinking.
4. Students receive an appropriate curriculum which is balanced between basic skills and experiences which develop scientific and creative self-expressive behavior.

5. Students have opportunities for social and intellectual interaction among gifted peers with similar interests and abilities.
6. Students are encouraged to develop independent behavior, through shared responsibility for planning, evaluating, and decision making.

Maryland's program guidelines state that an appropriate instructional program "reflects modification of *content* (what is taught and when it is taught—sequence and pacing), *instructional strategies* (how it is taught) and the *setting* (the environment in which learning occurs).

> The differentiated instructional program for the gifted includes both elements that are different and elements that are similar to those in the regular program for their chronological peers. While some aspects of the regular curriculum will need to be adapted, others will need to be added which may be quite unique for the gifted/talented population.

Content

1. The instructional program provides opportunities for gifted/talented students to develop proficiency in concepts and skills of the regular classroom.
2. Content of the curriculum focuses on the major concepts and processes central to the given subject area.
3. Greater emphasis is placed on development and application of creative and critical thinking skills.
4. Curriculum content includes interdisciplinary studies requiring the integration of both concepts and methodology from various disciplines.
5. Opportunities are provided for the acquisition of a broad base of knowledge through the study of a wide range of subjects.
6. A wide variety of appropriate resources are used, including primary sources, specialized reference materials, and experts in the field.

Instructional Strategies

7. Instructional strategies for the gifted provide for greater learner involvement in educational decision making.
8. Instructional strategies for the gifted are selected to promote an earlier development of the individual student as an independent learner.
9. Instructional strategies for the gifted are selected to elicit the students' use of higher level thinking skills.
10. Instructional strategies for the gifted require the teacher to become a facilitator of learning and a manager of resources.
11. Instructional strategies selected promote the gifted students' understanding of self and society.

Differentiated Curriculum for Underrepresented Gifted Students. In an effort to create "greater flexibility to better meet the needs of students from under-represented groups [non-white racial/ethnic minorities, students with limited English proficiency and those from low socio-economic backgrounds] in programs for the gifted," Florida revised its planning guide. With respect to curriculum, the guide urges that

> rather than merely reflecting the background of the cultural groups being served, [curricular planning] should include preparation for a changing world without denigration of the originating culture. Vital to such planning is attention to self-image, a realistic grasp of the global picture, which reduces feelings of isolation,

and achievable standards of excellence which provide opportunities for growth while fostering cultural pride.

The Florida guide poses a number of questions that local districts should consider in the curriculum planning process, questions dealing with environmental sensitivity and awareness, self-awareness, community involvement, enhanced self-image, orientation to success, historical perspective, focus on values, transition between cultures, reducing the sense of loss and feasibility of operation. The guide lists a number of instructional program modifications or adaptations that represent "best practices developed by a number of districts in Florida to address the needs and characteristics of potentially gifted students from underrepresented groups. These deal with skills, cultural, leadership, and enrichment enhancements and support services. For example,

Skill enhancements include:

- building on thinking skill development from the earlier activity-based program will create "cognitive readiness." Specific instruction in analytic thinking improves students' performance on academic tests and tasks throughout their time in school.
- building vocabulary using a conceptual system for teaching related word groups will improve comprehension and expression. (Students should be sensitized to cultural nuances, including both connotation and denotation, as well as the meanings of idiom.)
- developing students' ability to use and understand sophisticated syntax will enhance expression in both oral and written forms.
- providing students with strategies for grade improvement will improve overall academic performance.

Cultural enhancements include:

- incorporating the traditions and imagery of different cultures;
- using community resources to provide students with opportunities to participate in cultural and local activities;
- inviting community leaders to serve as role models, mentors, and resource persons;
- exposing students to the fine and performing arts;
- developing appreciation and understanding of the traditions and symbolism of different cultures.

Improving Policies for Differentiated Curriculum for the Gifted. In sum, when curriculum is discussed in state documents, a "differentiated curriculum" is always called for. However, the nature and the elements or components of a differentiated curriculum for the gifted are usually only vaguely addressed. The same generality applies to instructional strategies. State policies tend not to deal adequately with the issues concerning the subjects to be studied, the courses that must be taken, the standards or attainment levels that must be realized, the scope and sequence that should be followed, or the curricular balance that should be provided. Policies suggest that gifted students be provided with curricular experiences that differ in depth or breadth, tempo or pace, and/or nature or kind. Policies also recommend curricular flexibility.

Where current state documents discuss or imply how the state's regular elementary, middle or junior high school, and senior high curriculum should or might be modified, the details for implementation are left to local districts. In this respect, states reflect differences

in the ways they oversee the regular curriculum and their policies regarding curriculum for the gifted are determined by the nature of their control over curriculum in general.

Many states are currently engaged in establishing standards in most, if not all, curricular areas. State policies would be strengthened by specific attention to differentiation of curriculum standards for the gifted as an integral part of creating curriculum standards for all students. They would be strengthened by states taking greater leadership in curriculum design and development so that local schools could join with the state in upgrading the quality of learning.

State policies are particularly weak with respect to aesthetic and affective education. Aesthetic and affective education receive only minimal attention and that in just a few of the documents. This is a reflection of state policies in general that have weakened concern and support for education in the arts, let alone the identification and nurturing of artistic talents. More attention to examining the issues and defining the concepts of a balanced curriculum for the gifted and talented would result in strengthening state curriculum policies.

Counseling and Other Support Services

It is generally recognized, particularly in legislation or regulations in which the gifted are considered part of special education (P.L. 94-142), that guidance, psychological, and other support services are needed and that these are not identical with those required by handicapped students. In some states, however, the gifted are specifically omitted from the psychological and other support services that are mandated for special education students, often on the assumption that they can be assisted by the services available to the general student population.

Specialists for the Identification Process. Several states call for involvement of psychological or psychometric specialists in the identification process only. For example, Illinois incorporates "professional judgment" in its identification and assessment process and includes "teacher or specialist, e.g., counselor, psychologist or other professional evaluation." In several states, "qualified professionals" such as psychologists are required for the identification process since instruments are recommended or required that can only be administered by trained specialists.

A number of states specify that psychologists, counselors or other specialists be part of a multidisciplinary team that evaluates or identifies gifted and talented students. South Carolina gives responsibility for screening, identification, and selection of gifted students to an Evaluation/Placement Team which "shall be composed of at least a teacher, an administrator, a psychologist (if employed in the district), and may also include a guidance counselor and/or community-related person whose training and expertise qualifies him/her to appraise the special competencies of students." The State of Washington's "Criteria for Excellent Programs" include suggestions for a multidisciplinary selection committee that should consist "of at least the following personnel: a classroom teacher or gifted program teacher, a psychologist or other qualified practitioner, and a district administrator."

Counseling and Support Services for the Gifted. Some states suggest that gifted and talented students have distinctive counseling and guidance needs, particularly in the affective areas of social and emotional development, requiring special support services. For example, Utah's program standards require that districts "provide guidance to assist students in addressing personal and interpersonal needs, in program selection, and in career and college choices." One of Wisconsin's "related standards" states that: "Many gifted children are at risk and need attention, counsel, and support to help them realize their potential." Hawaii recommends that programs for the gifted should provide special emphases such as: "Guidance activities to understand themselves better, to develop interpersonal skills, and to make the best use of their educational opportunities."

Idaho's resource manual observes that guidance experiences are an important aspect of a program for the gifted in that they provide "opportunities to understand oneself and others, as well as to explore possible career choices." Such opportunities can be furnished through individual conferences, group meetings, career and vocational counseling, educational counseling, community programs and sponsorship, scholarship societies, study groups, special education classes, and tutoring.

Colorado's State Board of Education recommends that each local district have a staffing plan that includes the following personnel to provide "Support Services":

Counselors: It is recommended that counselors be trained in the specific counseling and guidance needs of the gifted and talented, and that the social and emotional needs of these students be addressed. It is recommended that career exploration and/or college counseling begin early in the school program, and that counselors participate in scheduling of appropriate educational services for all g/t students.

Pupil personnel specialists and psychologists: These people provide psychological services, curriculum support materials, and home-school liaisons. They may also serve on advisory committees and/or placement committees.

California includes "special counseling" as an optional type of program that may be provided:

Pupils participate regularly, on a planned basis, in a special counseling or instructional activity or seminars carried on during or outside of the regular school day for the purpose of benefiting from additional educational opportunities not provided in the regular classroom in which the pupils are enrolled.

Washington recommends the creation of a supportive learning environment with services available to identified gifted students that address their special needs, including:

- Counselor placement in honors/advanced placement classes
- Sophomore SAT assessment
- Scholarship application workshops
- Financial aid workshops
- Applying to competitive college workshops
- Stress management workshops
- Early outreach program for highly capable junior high students
- Parent workshops: scholarships and financial aid, college night, parenting gifted adolescents, other.

A few states suggest that counseling and support services be given to particular gifted populations, e.g., underachieving and minority students.

Oklahoma's regulations call for providing affective support for gifted students, giving responsibility to the gifted program teacher/coordinator or resource teacher for organizing "services for identified students needing academic or personal counseling."

Support Services for Underrepresented Populations. Florida's planning guide aims at enlarging participation of underrepresented groups and suggests consideration of a variety of support services, most of which are appropriate for other populations as well:

- providing problem-solving sessions using a cooperative approach involving administrators, counselors, teachers in related areas, specialists such as psychologists, and community members where appropriate
- providing the students with opportunities to interact with other minority students who have been successful in school and can share strategies of how to plan for academic success.
- providing emotional support to students through teachers and counselors who are sensitive to the special needs of gifted minority students
- providing ongoing support for students from underrepresented groups in gifted programs by assigning mentors from the community who meet with students one hour a week, and through training for the guidance counselor to whom student has ready access.

Improving Policies Regarding Counseling Services for the Gifted. There appears to be little real disagreement that gifted and talented students need support services and guidance experiences that will nurture, as Ohio's rules put it, "personal/social awareness and adjustment; academic planning and performance; and vocational and career awareness, investigation, and planning" or, as Pennsylvania's guidelines recommend, that "implement affective aspects of the program" and "provide guidance for gifted students which will help them to make thoughtful long-range decisions about school and career choices beginning in the elementary years." However, there are issues about whether the counseling needs and other supportive services for the gifted are so distinct and unique that they require special personnel and programs or whether they can be provided as part of the school's overall guidance and counseling efforts.

The *Virginia Plan for the Gifted* states that, "in addition to their required courses for endorsement, counselors should receive special training in guidance and counseling programs for gifted students and their parents." This policy implies that there are special knowledge and skills required for counseling gifted students and their parents, that all counselors should acquire those competencies, and that such support services can be provided as part of a school's regular guidance/counseling program.

State policies would be strengthened by a clear statement of what are perceived as the unique and different counseling needs of the gifted, by sensitizing school personnel to those needs through staff development, and by recommending that responsibility and accountability for coordinating those services be clearly assigned.

Parents

Most state policies regarding the gifted require, recommend, or suggest that parents be involved in all facets of their children's education—identification, placement, program, support, enrichment, and advocacy. These suggestions and recommendations concerning parent involvement range from very general to quite specific.

At a general level, California's Education Code "requires that school districts ensure continuous parent participation in gifted and talented program planning and evaluation." On the other hand, Colorado's Guidelines recommend active parent involvement in a variety of program aspects:

> It is recommended that parents be encouraged to take an active role in the education of their gifted and talented children, and that efforts be made to provide educational programs for these parents to orient them to the district's program and to help them address the needs of their own children. It is recommended that involvement of parents be documented at the local and state levels, and that parents be encouraged to participate on advisory and steering committees at the state, district, and local school levels. It is also recommended that they be encouraged to join local and/or district parent groups supporting gifted education.

Similarly, Idaho's resource manual advocates direct parent involvement:

> [Beginning] with the student identification process and should be an integrated component throughout the program. When developing the plan for a district program, consideration should be given for involvement of parents in meetings, conferences, or workshops that define and explain gifted programs. Workshops should be designed to increase the understanding of parents about their own child as well as about the program in general. Opportunities should be made available to orient parents to participate in advisory groups or committees, of which they may be members.

Pennsylvania includes parents among the personnel whose knowledgeable support is "needed to ensure that an appropriate program is developed, implemented, evaluated, and maintained." In describing their responsibilities, the guidelines state that parents should:

- Participate in planning and evaluating the learning experiences of their child through the IEP procedures.
- Participate in the development of the district's gifted program upon request.
- Support administration and staff responsible for implementation of the program.
- Be an advocate for the continuation and improvement of the program to insure that it meets the learning and affective needs of the gifted.
- Recommend their own children for possible placement in the district program.
- Provide suggestions on adequacy and appropriateness of materials, equipment, and facilities.
- Support students in selection of learning alternatives that promote excellence of achievement.
- Be aware of regular program modification/differentiation and learning alternatives available to the gifted.

Parental Involvement Under Public Law 94-142. Where the gifted and talented are included under P.L. 94-142, the parameters of parent involvement are spelled out clearly. For example, Alabama's Administrative Policy Manual specifies that parental consent is required for placement: "A qualified student, having been determined eligible, can be placed in a program for the gifted upon written approval of the parents." Further, an Individualized Education Program must be developed and implemented for each gifted child and his/her parents must be notified of and participate in a meeting to discuss and approve the IEP.

Alaska's Special Education Regulations mandate that parents have access to all of their child's records, have the right to request that records be amended and to give their consent for release of those records. Mississippi's regulations call for parents' involvement in the referral, identification, and placement processes.

Arkansas's Standards for Program Approval require that parents grant permission for individual testing; be informed of the criteria for placement in a program for the gifted; give written permission for the child's participation; and retain the right to appeal a placement with which they disagree.

Oklahoma's regulations state that regardless of the method used in identification and placement, each district must "notify in writing the parents of each child identified as gifted of the fact that the child has been so identified." The district must also "provide each such parent a summary of the program to be offered such child."

Parent Participation in the Gifted Child's Education. State policies provide for or encourage parent participation in all aspects of the gifted child's education. For instance, Ohio's guidelines for identification of gifted children, include parents among the persons who may complete nomination forms. South Dakota's regulations state that parents or guardians must be included on the gifted review team which has responsibility for identifying students. Virginia requires that each school division "shall provide a local advisory committee [on the gifted] composed of parents, teachers, and community members, and others whose purpose is to advise the school board."

Wyoming's state plan calls for parent involvement in the education of the gifted:

> The cooperation and involvement of parents in the planning, development and evaluation of local programs is essential. Therefore, communication and cooperation between the home and the school are important factors in helping gifted children use and develop their abilities.
>
> Parents of eligible children should be informed of plans and programs before their children enter programs and should always be informed of decisions which involve identification or program changes for their children.
>
> Parents should be encouraged to utilize their talents in the classrooms and in other activities which contribute to their children's educational program.

Texas's State Plan asserts that "if the gifted/talented program is to be successful, parents must be included as partners in the education of their children and should receive information related to program objectives and activities that can support the school process." The plan lists two principles and spells out the criteria to be applied for parent involvement:

Principle I: Parents and community members are involved in the evaluation and planning process related to the gifted/talented program.

- Parents and community members are informed about the education of gifted students through awareness level activities such as news releases, brochures, and meetings in order to develop a broad base of understanding and support.
- Parents and community members are kept informed of district needs in relation to the program and about conditions and legislation that affect the education of gifted students.
- Parents and community members are actively involved through participation on the planning committee and in program operation.
- Parents and community members are encouraged to nominate students for the program.
- Parents give written permission for students to participate in the program.
- Products and achievements of gifted students are shared with the community, and program visitations are encouraged.
- Activities involving parents and community are assessed periodically in order to determine both the degree and effectiveness of communication and involvement.

Principle II: Parents of gifted/talented students receive information about program development, their children's progress, and how they, as parents, can contribute to the program.

- Parents receive information on the characteristics of gifted students, on other facets of gifted education, and on ways they can assist the district in planning and implementing the program.
- Parents have opportunities through group meetings and individual conferences to discuss their children's abilities, needs, and progress as well as ways they can assist the school in strengthening those abilities both at home and school.
- Parents are encouraged to organize or join a group that shares information and supports gifted/talented education.

Materials to Assist Parent Participation. Some states have prepared materials specifically for parents. The *Oregon Handbook for Parents of Talented and Gifted Children* is designed to enhance the understanding of "the needs of gifted children and the important role parents have in their education in the public schools" as well as "how talented and gifted programs are to be implemented in school districts, and what rights and responsibilities families have under the law." The handbook contains information concerning national and state law, provides details concerning the Oregon Talented and Gifted Education Act as interpreted through Oregon Administrative Rules, clarifies how programs are to be implemented by local districts and describes the legal rights and responsibilities of parents. The Oregon handbook responds to parent interests and addresses broad areas that were identified by a needs assessment.

An appendix, "A Guide for Parents of Academically Gifted Children," in a North Carolina publication entitled *Academically Gifted Programs: A Handbook of Procedures and Best Practices* provides information covering such topics as definitions, characteristics, the school's role, the parent's role, learning characteristics, and gifted advocacy groups.

Enhancing Policies Regarding Parent Participation. As is true for all children, parents of gifted and talented children should be actively and intimately involved

in their education. State policies encourage, or in a few cases require, parent participation in programs for the gifted in a number of ways: serving on planning committees; involvement in the identification process; taking part in the placement process; and acting as mentors and advocates. Some states address questions of parenting, providing information, and counseling.

Maine's guidelines include parents in the identification process, noting that:

> Parents have important information to share regarding their child's abilities, aptitudes, and interests, particularly since they often see their child in self-initiated activities, in non-academic settings, and in situations that involve adults and acquaintances of various ages. They also have seen their child grow and develop through various stages.

It is a truism that education would be strengthened were parents actively and thoughtfully involved in all aspects of the process. State policies that recommend involvement in the education of the gifted as a parental right and responsibility would not only strengthen gifted education but set a pattern for enhancing school-home partnerships generally. State policies should encourage and facilitate parents' involvement in curriculum development and other program areas. In this way, parents of the gifted could well serve as positive models for other parent involvement. In doing so, they could make a substantial contribution to alleviating the perennial issues of elitism and separatism often associated with programs for the gifted.

Teacher Education and Certification

Although states are in agreement with the importance of teachers in the identification and education of gifted students, relatively few specify special certification or endorsement requirements or detail preservice or inservice education. Some policies refer to the need for staff development and urge that it be provided but are usually vague about the nature of such teacher education.

The Council of State Directors (1991) reported that "special certification requirements must be met in 14 states. This is "accomplished primarily with graduate hours, in-service hours or levels of competency" (p. 33). The report also notes that "Program funding for gifted/talented which is linked to special certification occurs in 17 states" (p. 33). Coleman and Gallagher (1992) reported that 20 states have some mention of personnel preparation.

Desirable Characteristics of Teachers of the Gifted. Some states list what are perceived as desirable characteristics or traits of teachers for the gifted for local districts to consider in selecting staff members for those assignments. For instance, Maryland's guidelines provide local districts with two "criteria for excellence" regarding teacher selection. These are:

> A process to ensure the selection of appropriate teachers for the gifted/talented students is established and clearly articulated.
>
> Criteria for the selection of teachers are based on a set of competencies and characteristics supported by research as being important to effective teaching of the gifted:
>
> - Awareness of the cognitive and affective needs of gifted/talented students and a desire to teach them;
> - Expertise in content and instructional methods;
> - Ability to impart intellectual curiosity and enthusiasm for learning to students;
> - High level of energy, enthusiasm, and resourcefulness;
> - Openness to innovation and acceptance of divergent, creative thinking;
> - Security in dealing with intellectual precocity;
> - Ability to facilitate students' independence and development of personal responsibility for their own learning; and
> - Willingness to pursue training for needed professional understanding and competencies.

Although it has neither teacher certification nor endorsement, New York State does require that teachers be certified "in the specific grade levels or academic, special, and occupational subjects included in the local program for gifted students." Noting that "teachers play critical roles in the selection, instruction, and guidance of gifted students," New York suggests that the following criteria be considered in making teacher assignments:

- Before assigning personnel to teach gifted students, an administrator should examine all available staffing options, including using mentors, team teaching, using several individual teachers and/or rotation of teachers. Selected teachers and staff configuration should reflect the educational needs of that school's gifted students and the requirements of the program developed to meet those student needs.
- Teachers of gifted should be selected as carefully as students are selected for programs for the gifted.
- Teachers of gifted students should have academic backgrounds and instructional competencies appropriate to teachers of gifted students.
- Teachers of gifted students should have both a knowledge of the characteristics of gifted learners and also personal attitudes which help them work effectively.
- Every teacher and mentor selected to work with gifted students should be evaluated periodically by the school board or appropriate personnel to assure that these individuals are suitably matched to the gifted students they teach. This evaluation of the teacher-student relationship—how this relationship affects the program—is independent of the periodic review of pupil achievement or progress.

Texas's State Plan provides a list of "competencies of successful teachers of the gifted" under three categories:

- Exhibits an understanding of the general characteristics of all gifted students and the specific characteristics of each gifted child.
- Demonstrates knowledge of curriculum development, implementation, and instructional strategies appropriate for gifted students.
- Functions as an educator and trainer of educators and parents.

States' Teacher Certification or Endorsement. Several states require only that teachers of the gifted, as is true in South Carolina, "must hold valid teaching certificates appropriate to the grade level(s) or subject area(s) included in the program." In the case of the visual and performing arts, professionals may teach "if validated as an artist by the South Carolina Arts Commission and if serving in the program under the supervision of the appropriate district personnel." Local districts are required to describe and incorporate "appropriate ongoing staff development activities" and to "demonstrate coordination of State gifted and talented staff development and total staff development."

Texas requires that teachers of the gifted "must be certified in the subject areas and levels in which they are assigned, but are not required to be certified in gifted education." In addition, Texas requires that districts funded for approved programs "provide a minimum of five days of staff development for teachers of the gifted who have not previously received training in the area of gifted education" with a stipulation that beginning in 1991, "teachers must be trained prior to their assignment."

Alabama's policy requires that "when gifted students are taught in a gifted setting, the teacher must be certified in Gifted Education as specified in State certification standards approved by the State Board of Education."

For certification as a teacher of the gifted, Louisiana requires a valid teaching certificate, a master's degree from a regionally accredited college or university, and a minimum of 21 semester hours of credit as follows:

1. Nine semester hours of graduate credit in the teaching area in which the teacher is certified to teach. Advanced methods courses in the subject areas will also be accepted for elementary certified teachers.
2. Twelve semester hours of credit involving the following course content areas including (a) and (b) below:

    a. Characteristics/Study of Gifted Individuals
    b. Methods of Teaching the Gifted
    c. Curriculum Development for the Gifted
    d. Interpretation of Assessment Data on Gifted
    e. Techniques of Counseling for the Gifted
    f. Research
    g. Creative Thinking and Problem Solving
    h. Introduction to Education of Exceptional Children

In addition, Louisiana requires a three-semester hour practicum involving academically gifted students, or a one-year internship for college credit in academically gifted supervised by a college of education faculty member, or three years of successful teaching experience in academically gifted. The academically gifted certification is valid only in the subject(s) or teaching area(s) in which the teacher is already certified.

Arizona's policy provides for certification endorsement "required of all persons serving as a gifted classroom teacher, gifted resource teacher, gifted specialist, or other teacher responsible for providing gifted instruction, or whose daily instructional contacts including a majority of students gifted in that area of instruction." The regular endorsement requirements are as follows:

- Arizona Elementary, Secondary or Special Education Certificate.
- Twelve semester hours in gifted education coursework...(A maximum of 90 clock hours of in-service education may be used to substitute for 6 hours in Gifted Education).
- Nine upper division or graduate semester hours in an academic area.
- Six semester hours of practicum with the gifted, OR; two years of full-time verifiable teaching experience in gifted at the appropriate grade level(s) may be used in lieu of practicum.

North Dakota requires a teacher to have a regular teaching certificate plus a credential in the area of education of gifted students that involves: (a) at least two years of successful teaching experience in regular education, (b) 6 semester hours of Education of Gifted Students, and (c) 3 semester hours of student teaching of gifted students.

Preservice and Inservice Teacher Preparation and Staff Development. In most policies, there is little mention of teacher preparation, especially at the preservice levels. Some states offer undergraduate courses but none require that such courses be taken.

Utah's mission statement sets forth both preservice and inservice goals for its education agencies requiring them to: promote statewide networking of approved endorsement programs through institutions of higher education that meet specific standards; orient teachers, administrators, and others to educational principles and practices appropriate to the gifted and talented; "build accountability into certification, lane changes, etc. for education of the gifted and talented"; and use a networking system to inform educators about advanced training opportunities, materials and resources. Utah's

"standards" require teachers of the gifted to have demonstrated competence in the following areas:

- Knowledge of the philosophy, organization, and professional activities related to the education of gifted and talented students.
- Understanding the process of preliminary screening, formal identification, and selection of gifted and talented children and youth.
- Knowledge of research in the cognitive and affective domains and its implications for the education of the gifted and talented.
- Consulting with gifted and talented students and their parents relative to the assessment of the student's academic, social, emotional, physical, and psychological functioning, and the subsequent planning, development, and implementation of the student's educational program.
- Planning, developing, and implementing differentiated, thematic, and interdisciplinary curricula appropriate for gifted and talented students.
- Instructional and programmatic approaches that facilitate thinking, communication, and research skills that lead to the production of new knowledge by gifted and talented students.
- Efficient, innovative, and effective use of human technological, and material resources.
- Personal and group guidance with emphasis on developmental differences, learning style variations, self-concept.
- Interpersonal relations, and problem solving and leadership skills for gifted and talented children and youth.
- Knowledge of the administration, supervision, and evaluation of programs for the gifted. Participation (at some level) in a professional organization which is committed to improving the education of gifted and talented young people may be required.

Improving Policies Regarding Teacher Education and Certification for the Gifted. States seem not to have initial certification of teachers for the gifted at the undergraduate or preservice level. States with policies that do require certification or endorsement build on the regular or normal teaching certificate in the subject(s), area(s) or grade level(s) in which the individual is to teach the gifted. Certification often requires additional coursework focused on the nature and nurturing of the gifted, a practicum or verifiable experience teaching the gifted and, in some cases, a master's degree.

States that do not have certification or endorsement often discuss desirable traits or characteristics of teachers of the gifted or provide criteria to be considered in selecting teachers of the gifted. Only a few states issue sets of standards or criteria which are intended to provide guidance for the preparation of teachers or for their selection.

There appears to be consensus that teachers of the gifted and talented must have strengths and capabilities beyond those required for teachers generally. There is, however, no agreement as to whether there should be special certification or endorsement for teachers of the gifted and only a minority of states have moved in that direction to date.

Even as the issue of the need for special certification or endorsements is being discussed, policies in all states would be improved were all teachers and other certified personnel required to have course work dealing with the nature and nurture of the gifted and talented. In New York City, for example, such a requirement exists with respect to special education wherein all teachers have to complete six credits for their initial certification on the assumption that every teacher needs to have basic information about

teaching children with disabilities. The same argument can be made that every teacher needs to know about working with gifted children.

State policies would also be strengthened by greater specificity and guidance regarding inservice staff development requirements for teachers of the gifted and others. The Council of State Directors (1991) report indicates that only five states require teachers to have inservice hours in order to work with the gifted and talented. In light of the acknowledged needs of teachers who work or will work with the gifted, staff development opportunities need considerable improvement, and leadership for this must come from the state level.

Program Evaluation

Evaluation plays an important part in many state policy statements—sometimes required, more often suggested. The multifaceted process takes many forms—sometimes focused on individual student assessment, sometimes on program appraisal, and sometimes on both. Where states recommend or require written plans, program evaluation is usually one of the elements of such plans. Program evaluation may also be part of the state's monitoring process, particularly when tied to funding. In a few instances, evaluation of the effectiveness of Individualized Education Plans (IEPs) is required. Some states recommend evaluation as necessary to decision-makers for program improvement. A number of states make no mention of evaluation at all.

The Iowa Administrative Code mandates that each local district give attention in its evaluation design to: (a) "measuring program effects and providing information for program improvement," (b) assessing cognitive and affective components of student growth, (c) studying "each program level where objectives have been established," and (d) reviewing each student's personalized education plan.

Several states provide detailed guidelines for designing and conducting program evaluation. One of the "criteria for excellence in programming for gifted and talented students" in Maryland's guidelines deals with evaluation as one of six program components as follows:

1. The evaluation process provides accurate, timely, and relevant information to decision-makers for program improvement.
2. A systematic plan for ongoing evaluation is part of program planning and implementation.
3. Evaluation assesses processes and products of each component of the gifted/talented program [including]: identification, instructional program, staff training, teacher selection, program management, and the evaluation process.
4. The evaluation process focuses upon the differentiation of programs provided for the gifted and talented students, the quantity, quality, and appropriateness of experiences provided are assessed.
5. Attention is given to the assessment of student progress, including: mastery of content, demonstration of higher level thinking skills, achievement in the specific program area(s), and affective growth.
6. Data for evaluation is obtained from a variety of instruments, procedures, and information sources as appropriate.
7. Evaluation results are communicated in a timely and meaningful way to program decision-makers at the system and/or school level and, as appropriate, to students, parents, and the public.

New Jersey's state plan recommends that both formative (continuing) and summative (final) evaluation are needed:

> Formative evaluation should take place during each step in the development of a program, i.e., needs assessment, goal development, identification, curriculum differentiation, planning for facilities and supplies, staff training, evaluation procedures, and scheduling of timelines. Based upon continuing formative evaluation, necessary changes may be made to improve and/or expand the program during the school year.

> Summative evaluation should take place after each phase of implementation to insure that the established goals and objectives are being met. An important aspect of the summative evaluation should be assessment of pupil progress. Based upon this evaluation, necessary changes or adaptations to the program may be planned and implemented during the following school year.

Indiana's regulations require that every program establish procedures for both formative and summative evaluation to determine its effectiveness and "must solicit evaluation input from administrators, teachers, counselors, parents, students, and community members." The evaluation design must identify program strengths and weaknesses in these areas: student progress, program design, student needs, learning environment, program goals and curriculum, student identification, personnel qualifications, resources, staff and community awareness, and cost effectiveness.

Evaluation as Synonymous with Individual Identification. In some states, especially where gifted education is part of special education under P.L. 94-142, the term "evaluation" is used synonymously with individual diagnosis and identification. For example, Alaska requires each district to "conduct an individual evaluation of the educational needs of a child who is referred...to determine whether the child is eligible for special education and related services." Alabama's policy states: "When any one of the reasons cited in the referral can be substantiated, the public education must conduct an evaluation to determine eligibility for gifted students." Within 60 days after receipt of a written referral, an evaluation of the potentially gifted student must include: an assessment of vision and hearing, an individually administered intelligence test, and documentation to substantiate levels of academic achievement. Louisiana's "Procedures for Evaluation" and "Re-Evaluation" cover student identification and classification.

Program Evaluation. New York's guidelines for local district planning state that: "Program evaluation should interact with and support program implementation from start to finish. So conceptualized, program evaluation can also be a decision-support system for the program manager or coordinator."

Idaho's *Resource Manual for Gifted/Talented Programs* recommends that evaluation focus on both the overall program operation and specific student progress in order "to determine the extent to which program goals, objectives, and activities are being achieved, and their impact upon student progress." The manual details techniques and procedures for evaluating student outcomes and program effectiveness as well as for judging program appropriateness.

North Carolina's *Program Quality Evaluation-Gifted* is "designed to aid a local education agency in an assessment of the overall quality of the current programs and services for academically gifted students." The focus of *PQE-G* is on three program goals, together with related objectives:

1. A systematic process of screening, evaluation and annual review/reevaluation is used that maximizes identification opportunities for all students, K-12.
2. The scope and sequence of each gifted program provide appropriate differentiation at each grade level that goes beyond the regular curriculum (the regular curriculum being that course of study intended for the majority of students in the school system at that grade).
3. The school system has demonstrated its commitment to gifted education by providing for growth and development.

The data obtained from the student record reviews and surveys, once analyzed, provide the basis for a school system-developed management plan. The management plan outlines the overall evaluation process and includes a time-line of implementation activities that will strengthen the school system's gifted program.

Minnesota's standards provide criteria for evaluating both curriculum-based and student-based services for gifted and talented students. The six criteria for *curriculum-based services* are as follows:

1. The student's curriculum is compacted for accelerated learners.
2. Students are encouraged to pursue their personal interests and are stimulated to develop new interests or fields of study.
3. Students are engaged in learning strategies which emphasize advanced thinking.
4. Students receive an appropriate curriculum which is balanced between basic skills and experiences which develop scientific and creative, self-expressive behavior.
5. Students have opportunities for social and intellectual interaction among gifted peers with similar interests and abilities.
6. Students are encouraged to develop independent behavior, through shared responsibility for planning, evaluating, and decision making.

Minnesota's six criteria for evaluating student-based services consist of the following:

1. The student's curriculum is compacted for accelerated learners.
2. The student and parents participate in the determination of educational objectives, the planning of appropriate learning activities and the development of a personalized learning plan.
3. The student learns to understand and use the thought systems and methods of professionals in a chosen field or demonstrated area of talent.
4. The student's strengths are emphasized in learning activities.
5. The student is valued in a school climate where there is respect for all learning and the development of individual potential is respected.
6. The student has opportunities for social and intellectual interaction among gifted peers with similar interests and abilities.

Student Evaluation. Some state policies focus on student evaluation rather than program evaluation. For example, every three years, Kansas students placed in approved gifted programs must undergo a comprehensive reevaluation by a multidisciplinary team of professionals using multiple sources of data in order to decide whether to continue or discontinue services. The document provides suggestions regarding sources of data, techniques and procedures for product evaluation, use of test data, and "additional testing information indicated by specific needs including self-image, learning styles, career/ vocational aspirations, creativity, cognitive or academic achievement, and other [specific needs] as identified by the reevaluation team."

Evaluation for Funding or Program Approval. In order to maintain their program approval status, local Maine districts must submit the "results of the annual self-evaluation process" that had been described in the original application. Proposals submitted to Montana for state approval must contain "a method to evaluate the effectiveness of the program." California's Education Code requires that:

each district evaluate its GATE Program annually. The written evaluation of the district's gifted and talented program should examine pupil progress as well as all the provisions described in the written plan. The summary of the evaluation data should be available upon written request of the Superintendent of Public Instruction.

For school accreditation, Arkansas requires "that each school use procedures to evaluate the effectiveness of educational opportunities provided for gifted and talented students." Arkansas's program evaluation standards include the following:

1. The evaluation process provides accurate, timely, and relevant information to decision-makers for improving program options offered gifted students.
2. A plan for evaluation is developed at the time the program is planned, specifying data to be collected and personnel responsible for analysis of the data.
3. All components of the gifted/talented program are evaluated: identification, staff development, program options, curriculum, community involvement, and evaluations.
4. Data for evaluation are obtained from a variety of instruments, procedures, and information sources.
5. Evaluation findings are compiled, analyzed, and communicated to appropriate audiences.
6. Student progress is assessed, with attention to mastery of content, higher level thinking skills, creativity, and affective growth.
7. Advanced content courses are noted on student transcripts.

To receive state aid funds "to develop comprehensive programming for the gifted and talented, districts must submit a 3-5 year plan" which provides evidence that attention is being given to several program components, including evaluation.

1. A district plan includes evaluation by the staff, students, and parents related to program implementation and goals.
2. Student outcomes are measured to determine instructional and curriculum effectiveness. Measures may include: product evaluation, tests (especially out-of-level academic tests), teacher and student checklists related to perceptions of improvement.
3. The program is revised as needed based upon evaluation results.

Evaluation of Programs for Underrepresented Gifted. Aimed at helping extend educational opportunities in programs for the gifted for culturally diverse learners and minorities, Florida's planning guide calls for an evaluation design that specifically addresses questions of progress toward the district's goal for increasing participation by students from those underrepresented groups:

> Possible activities include evaluating how effective the implementation of each component—screening and referral; criteria for eligibility; student evaluation; instructional program philosophy; curriculum modifications of adaptations; and support services; and evaluation design—was in achieving the goal of increased participation of underrepresented groups and ensuring their success and continued participation in the existing instructional programs.

Strengthening Policies on Evaluation. As New Hampshire's guidelines put it,

> [Evaluation is] a process of using information about programming to guide decision-making concerning present and future efforts. Its purposes include: guiding planning for maintaining or improving programming, comparing and selecting among several options or alternatives, and judging whether stated goals and objectives have been attained.

Whether the focus is on the evaluation of gifted students or on programs for the gifted, the process is an important, complex, and difficult one. The New Hampshire document gives four reasons why evaluation of gifted programs is particularly problematic:

1. Complex outcomes, such as those commonly stated for gifted programming, are not easy to measure.
2. The full impact or benefits of gifted programming for students may not be evident immediately.
3. The more effectively you integrate various components of your school program, the more difficult it becomes to "isolate" the impact of those components.
4. The greater the variety of services offered, the more diverse the criteria which would be needed to assess their effectiveness.

State policies on evaluation would be strengthened were they to make provisions for greater technical assistance to local districts in refining their skills and expertise for designing and implementing assessment procedures that lead directly to better decision-making regarding programs and provisions for the gifted and the impact on individual students. It was not until the passage of Title I of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act of 1965 that program evaluation became a required component of each local district's grant proposal. Since then, the significance of evaluation as an integral part of program decision-making has been recognized even though local districts have continued to find it a complex and difficult undertaking. The experience since ESEA of 1965 and subsequent federal and state legislation have made it clear that it is not enough for states to recommend or urge or even require evaluation without providing more technical assistance regarding the process and procedures. Strengthening state policies on evaluation of gifted programs would, at the same time, improve the potential of local districts to engage in the process as a way of improving decision-making more generally.

State Funding for the Gifted

The Council of State Directors (1991) described the evolution of state funding for the gifted as follows:

> Kansas, in 1953, was the first state to fund local education agencies with state dollars for gifted/talented programs. Oregon followed in 1957 and Florida in 1958. In the 1960s, an additional 6 states (California, Connecticut, Georgia, Illinois, North Carolina and Pennsylvania) funded programs. By the 1970s, 18 more states had produced funding and during the 1980s, 13 additional states offered funding for gifted/talented programs. Not all states have had continuous funding up to 1990 (p. 23).

During Fiscal Year 1990, state funding ranged from Florida's appropriation of just under $88 million to Montana's $100,000 and Massachusetts's $50,000 for inservice education (p. 23). With legislatures meeting annually or biennially, state funding of programs for the gifted has been uneven, irregular, and often discontinuous. When the federal government and states all over the nation faced severe budget crises in the early 1990s, funding for programs for the gifted became even more precarious with some states continuing to legislate financial support but failing to appropriate the monies needed for that funding.

States employ complex, intricate, and diverse procedures in the methods used to fund local school districts generally and the same can be said about funding programs for the gifted. State funding may be determined by foundation formulas, weighted per pupil units, fixed per pupil amounts, or other bases. In some states, districts are reimbursed for particular costs, such as those involved in identification of gifted students, teacher/coordinator salaries and benefits, instructional materials, transportation, or staff development. A few states base funding for the gifted on amounts provided for students in special education programs. In addition to allocating funds on the basis of the number of a local district's gifted and talented students, South Carolina appropriates funds for development of gifted education statewide—services that may include teacher training programs and workshops, consultant and technical assistance to districts, small grants and contracts, and training assistance to parents. New Jersey has a competition for grants that are judged in part on their "portability or replicability."

The selected examples listed below illustrate the diversity and complexity of state funding procedures. Although they are taken from the documents available at the time, because of the continuous fluctuations in state funding, many carried a notation indicating pending revision or change.

> **Alabama:** Funding "which shall not exceed the average per pupil appropriation for all exceptional children in each school district, including allowances for teacher units, transportation, and all other aid for exceptional children."

> **Arizona:** Districts that comply with the state's identification and program service requirements and whose teachers are certified or are working toward certification may "apply to the Department of Education for additional funding for gifted programs to equal fifty-five dollars per pupil for three per cent of the district's student count or one thousand dollars, whichever is more."

Arkansas: "Districts...shall receive funds for the operation of such programs based on an "add on" weight of .25 for each of its students identified as being gifted and/or talented in accordance with criteria approved by the State Board of Education. The number of gifted and talented students for which "add on" weights are granted...shall not exceed five percent (5%) of the district's ADM in the previous school year.

California: Applications must contain evidence that costs incurred are allowable, "incurred solely for providing state-approved programs for gifted and talented," clearly identifiable in the district's accounting records, would not otherwise have occurred had the approved program not been initiated, and "are most promising in assuring the development of the extraordinary capabilities of gifted and talented pupils." Direct costs include salaries, benefits, books and supplies, equipment replacement, and other operating expenses.

Idaho: "Salaries of pre-approved ancillary personnel, including facilitators for gifted programs, are reimbursed to employing districts at a level of 80% of placement on the district's regular teacher salary schedule." In addition, "Exceptional child support units are computed with a divisor of 14.5 ADA (Average Daily Attendance) per unit, providing the same amount of support unit funding generated by regular education, but for a fewer number of students."

Iowa: "The budget of each approved program will be funded on a basis of one-fourth or more from the district cost of the school district and up to three-fourths by an increase in allowable growth....The total budget may not exceed .012 (one point two percent) of the regular program district cost per pupil multiplied by the district budget enrollment."

Kentucky: School districts are funded on the basis of grant units, defined as serving 75 gifted students for one full day per week. No more than 5% of the total student population (an average of 5% per grade) may be identified for services provided by state funding. Districts receiving funding must appoint a coordinator who allocates no less than 25% of his/her time to administration of the program and at least 75% "to salaries of teachers or other qualified persons working directly with gifted students...." Funding is contingent on employing properly certified personnel.

Maine: The costs for a gifted and talented program "approved by the Commissioner for State subsidy aid and is part of the school day, are allowed." This includes costs of personnel with full-time teaching and/or administrative responsibility for the gifted program, the cost of staff development (e.g., in-service programs, training institutes, or conferences), costs of educational materials.

Michigan: "A district or consortium of districts may be eligible to receive an amount not to exceed $100.00 per K-12 pupil for up to 5% of the district's or consortium's K-12 membership with a minimum grant of $ 6,000.00."

Missouri: State aid reimbursement for instructional personnel (salary and benefits) who provide such "services exclusively to such gifted students during the time for which reimbursement is sought" and special materials which are "beyond those ordinarily provided in regular school programs and must be required for achievement of gifted program goals and learner objectives."

New Jersey: The State Education Department administers a competitive grant program for which local districts submit proposals. Local district proposals must include a rationale for the proposed program, a statement to support its effectiveness, a work plan, and a statement to support its portability or replicability.

North Carolina: Districts are reimbursed on a per capita basis for each identified gifted student.

Oregon: State funds are allocated on an approved program costs basis, the amount of which is established by the State Board annually. Districts must account for grant funds as expended for the identified pupils. In addition, the state can appropriate funds to provide support for the development of talented and gifted education statewide—services that may include teacher training programs and workshops, consultant and technical assistance to districts, small grants and contracts, and training assistance to parents.

Rhode Island: Costs allowed by the U.S. Department of Education General Administrative Regulations (EDGAR) and "only those funds used to supplement and, to the extent practical, to increase the level of funds that would, in the absence of state funds for programs, be made available from local sources for gifted programs" are eligible for reimbursement.

South Carolina: State funds appropriated are allocated "on the basis that the number of gifted and talented students served in each district bears to the total of all those students in the State." Those districts which cannot identify more than 40 students using the state's selection criteria receive $ 15,000 a year. Ten percent of the total state annual appropriation [for gifted/talented programs] must be set aside for serving artistically gifted and talented students in grades 3-12.

South Dakota: "Costs must directly relate to the educational plans for gifted students and for instructional services provided in the district." These include salaries, benefits, purchased services, and supplies and materials.

Texas: For each student served in an approved program for gifted and talented students and each student identified under State Board criteria, a district "is entitled to an annual allotment equal to the district's adjusted basic allotment...multiplied by" a factor which began at .032 for the 1985-86 year and increased to .12 for 1990-91 and thereafter. Not more than five percent of a district's students are eligible for funding under this formula. After each district has received its allotted funds, the State Board may use up to $500,000 "for programs such as Future Problem Solving, Olympics of the Mind, and Academic Decathlon, as long as these funds are used to train personnel and provide program services."

Utah: "Each district shall receive its share of funds in the proportion that the district's number of weighted pupil units for kindergarten through grade twelve and necessarily existent small schools bears to the state total." The funds can be used for planning, program development, and identification of students; salaries, inservice education costs, conferences, etc.; supplies, materials, and equipment which supplement or enhance education programs for the gifted.

Washington: Supplementary funds are provided for "categorical funding on an excess cost based upon a per student amount not to exceed three percent of any district's full-time equivalent enrollment."

Improving State Policies on Funding. At the time of the Coleman and Gallagher (1992) study, they found that "over half of the states (66%) have some type of mandate regarding attention to gifted students which is supported, to some degree, with state funding" (p. 7). They commented that: "Some observers feel that the presence of a state mandate, without accompanying funding, creates an illusion of support without reality, and produces a type of political fraud" (p. 9).

There are wide variations in the availability, the levels, the distribution formulas and the stability of state funding. An obvious way to strengthen state funding for programs for the gifted is to increase the appropriation and place it on a more stable basis. But, just as obviously, in light of the many factors that affect state funding for education, that is unrealistic and unlikely to happen. State policies would be strengthened, however, by a clear acknowledgment that for specific reasons, education for the gifted does require additional funding; that the state commits itself to providing that funding within the limits of its overall funding obligations; and that the state encourages local districts to budget for gifted education. At a minimal level, state policies could provide stable aid for staff development.

Strengthening the Foundations for Gifted Education

In many ways, education for the gifted has come a long way since pre-*Marland*. The fact that all 50 states have formulated policies in the form of legislation, regulations, rules, or guidelines that support education of the gifted and talented represents a very significant achievement, a consequence of vigorous and persistent efforts on the part of many advocates—parents, educators, politicians, and others—and indicates some degree of commitment to provide for the children and youth who are in need of differentiated educational experiences.

Having attained this goal, the time is now right for a reexamination of existing legislation, rules and regulations, taking into account research, experience and developments in education, psychology, organization, and related fields; the ongoing school reform and restructuring efforts; the changing context for society and schooling that is occurring; the distinctive state-local district relationships by which the diverse mandates and the regulations permitting discretionary programs are implemented differently; and the consequences of the ways local school districts have implemented state policies.

This analysis of state documents discloses that no one state's policy can serve as a model for all of the others. Whether a policy is effectively a "strong" or a "weak" one depends on the context—the factors and the relationships in which education and schooling function in that state. However, there are a number of elements or components of policy that seem to be essential to any policy. Examples have been presented as to how each of these policy elements are dealt with in various state documents.

As educators and other advocates reexamine and reassess their state's policies, the following suggestions might guide their review.

1. The nature of state mandates varies widely from directive or required to permissive. The importance of a state mandate for gifted education has been characterized by Coleman and Gallagher (1992) as follows:

> A mandate is a statement of a desired goal on the part of the state even if that goal is not realized. The state always has more policies than funds and must arrange them in a type of priority. As such, the mandate to provide an appropriate education for gifted students creates an expectation of what would be happening at the local level. It provides a type of permission and approval for parents to seek out special services for their gifted children. The mandate also serves as a moral and political basis for those wishing to advocate greater allocation of funds to this purpose. *For these reasons, a mandate needs to be seen as part of the process of obtaining desirable programming for gifted students* (p. 9). [Emphasis added.]

Whether a state mandate for gifted education is required and directive or discretionary and supportive, whether it carries adequate funding or provides little or no funding, it is important in determining what local school districts will do to plan and program for gifted and talented students.

In theory, mandated programs that require action on the part of the local district are more likely to advance and solidify local programming for the gifted than mandates that are discretionary. In practice, the general structure and relationships of the state to local districts determine the way and the extent that local districts actually implement a mandate.

Consequently, the extent to which local school districts perceive the state as enthusiastically and energetically supportive of education for the gifted and talented is an important determinant of what local districts do. State policy documents should be:

- Stated clearly, positively, and unmistakably supportive of adequate and appropriate education for identifying and nurturing talent potential.
- Framed as strongly as possible, taking account of the distinctive nature of the state's control and leadership.

2. Most states need to create and communicate sounder rationales and philosophic bases for making adequate and appropriate provisions for the gifted—i.e., education for the gifted and talented must be integrated into goals and purposes of the mainstream of American education.

From the beginning, programs and provisions for the gifted have often fueled controversy because they have been viewed as "elitist," "undemocratic," "privileged" or "unnecessary." The rationale for identifying and nurturing the gifted must be grounded in a meaningful commitment to develop the talent potential of all children to the maximum extent possible, including those who have manifested potential for outstanding achievement. Put in this framework, the rationale for educating gifted and talented children would not rest on some perceived external economic, military, or social threat, but on the conviction that the nature and needs of the gifted require differentiated educational experiences if they are to fulfill their promise. The expressed philosophy or rationale is a critical element of state policy which sets direction for local districts.

Several states communicate such a commitment (see the section on "Philosophy and Rationale" above) and their statements provide guidance for other states. For example, Kentucky's policy expresses a philosophy with a clear conviction that all students should have access to educational programs that enable them to develop to their maximum potential; that gifted students need educational opportunities that differ from those regularly available; that gifted students are found "at all levels of sex, race, socio-economic, or ethnic origin;" that all students should be provided "opportunities to reach the highest level of learning and accomplishment of which they are capable at each stage of their development."

A state's philosophy statement should provide clear guidance for the local district in expressing its basic beliefs and commitments regarding talent and talent development.

3. The definition of the gifted found in most state policies is a variation of the traditional definition which focuses on intelligence (IQ) and academic aptitude. Some states specify the broader "Marland definition," but still focus heavily on the first two areas of demonstrated achievement and/or potential in general intellectual ability and specific academic aptitude. Few state definitions reflect the existing knowledge base about the nature and diversity of human talents.

Although the conceptions of giftedness have broadened—Gardner's multiple intelligences and Sternberg's triarchic model are just two examples—it is the concept of giftedness as academic aptitude or intellectual ability that still dominates and drives school practice, possibly because "academics is what schools do."

In formulating a definition of giftedness, states should consider the six questions posed in New Hampshire's guidelines:

- Does the definition reflect contemporary knowledge of the nature and diversity of human talents and abilities?

- Does the definition take into account the importance of environmental impact and developmental differences?
- Does the definition describe giftedness in relation to meaningful, well-documented personal traits or characteristics?
- Does the definition reflect appropriately the variability in human performance over time or in various situations?
- Does the definition take into account the possibility of expanding human talents or abilities through effective instructional interventions? Does it recognize that many, perhaps all, important components of giftedness might be nurtured?
- Does the definition provide a clear and effective foundation for practical instructional planning, rather than merely leading to categorical inclusion or exclusion decisions?

4. Definitions of giftedness drive identification processes—i.e., the conception of giftedness guides the procedures and instruments used in the identification process. The practice of limiting identification to a fixed percentage of the student population or a specific IQ cut-off score is still found in state policies.

In light of newer conceptions of talent potential and of emerging insights concerning identification of giftedness in traditionally underrepresented groups, states need to review their policies regarding acceptable and appropriate identification procedures. State policies must be more specific in the guidelines provided for local school districts regarding identification procedures. Such guidelines should be based on sound current research and should:

- Begin the identification process with a broad talent pool, one based on valid instruments and procedures that are part of the school's normal diagnostic program.
- Involve all staff members in the initial identification steps in order to develop a broad group of "talent scouts."
- Employ more aggressive searches for multiple talents to be nurtured—including artistic ability (literary, performing arts, visual arts), creativity, leadership, technical or vocational areas, etc.
- Use multiple criteria and multiple procedures in identifying gifted and talented students.
- Stress ability or aptitude potential at early ages and actual performance at later ages.
- Provide opportunities for students to demonstrate potential through their performance and products, enabling self-identification.
- Provide identification opportunities that are continuous and ongoing, rather than a single-event occurrence.
- Employ procedures and instruments which aim at seeking out and identifying diverse talents of students from various ethnic, linguistic, economic, and cultural groups.

5. State policies vary widely regarding programming for the gifted and include every possible configuration. Although there appears to be consensus that programs for the gifted should be developed locally according to the needs of the population of a particular community, some states make funding contingent on following specific state guidelines and standards.

States differ in the program elements they deal with—some stress instructional elements such as goals and objectives, curriculum, teaching methods, and evaluation

procedures; others emphasize various acceleration and/or enrichment possibilities; and still others deal with organizational arrangements such as grouping, pull-out classes, and magnet programs.

A number of states have no prescribed or suggested program nor any details concerning curriculum or instruction. Those state documents may simply assert that there should be "modifications of instructional activities and services based on students' unique characteristics and needs" without suggesting the nature of such modifications.

Some states furnish a set of criteria or general standards that can be applied to a variety of instructional and organizational models, allowing teachers and schools to set up various options for students. Some list a number of optional experiences and services, advising only that "the program shall reflect the criteria used in determining eligibility."

Some policies specify that students must acquire the basic knowledge and skills of the state's common or regular curriculum as a prerequisite to engaging in elective opportunities. Some documents state that the curriculum for the gifted is to be differentiated in content, process, and/or product in terms of breadth or depth, tempo or pace and/or in kind, leaving to local districts to work out the details. Others only call for making available a wide variety of instructional alternatives, noting that the "gifted require differentiated curriculum with corresponding instructional strategies."

While policies regarding curriculum and instruction recommend or suggest "differentiation," the nature of the differentiation is stated in general rather than specific terms. Insofar as curriculum and instruction for the gifted and talented are concerned, policies seem to focus on a form of "general giftedness" with little attention to curriculum differentiation that would take into account different kinds and degrees of talent potential.

Most state policies on curriculum and instruction imply that curriculum differentiation is simply a matter of enriching or accelerating the regular curriculum. The policies include very few references to the numerous models and systems which have been designed and developed in recent years. Renzulli's Enrichment Triad and Revolving Door Models seem to receive most attention. At the secondary level, the Advanced Placement Program is frequently cited.

Where programs for the gifted are part of special education, Individualized Education Plans are required—IEPs conforming to the general guidelines of P.L. 94-142.

In general, policies regarding curriculum differentiation and instructional programs for the gifted lag behind theory and research regarding the nature and nurture of talent potential. State policies should consider a number of issues regarding overall programming, curriculum, and instruction. An ideal policy on differentiated curriculum and instruction should require local school districts to:

- Delineate goals for each identified student according to his/her area(s) of talent and exceptional interest and the multiplicity and diversity of human talents.
- Deal with the issues of curriculum content, scope and sequence, articulation, and integration as essential ingredients of curriculum design.
- Deal with issues of curricular balance, including questions of balance between the general/common curriculum and the specialized curriculum; the humanities and arts and science, mathematics and technology; acceleration and enrichment; the cognitive and affective learnings; and individualized/independent study and group/cooperative learning so that simplistic, fragmented, and unarticulated curriculum planning is avoided.

- Provide flexibility that allows for individual student growth and choice, including the right to choose not to continue participation.
- Plan for the use of new technologies—e.g., computer networks, satellite communications, interactive video, and lasers—as a means of extending and enriching learning resources.
- Design evaluation procedures that make assessment an integral part of the teaching-learning process.
- Plan for incorporating the learning opportunities in the community as part of the student's overall curricular experiences.

As has been demonstrated in the past, the policies on programming, curriculum and instruction for the gifted can provide models for curriculum reform for all students.

6. Most state policies were promulgated before the perennial controversy concerning ability grouping and tracking was again revived and before cooperative learning became the strategy of choice so that the issue of grouping as it relates to the education of the gifted and talented is not addressed. There is a considerable body of research and experience that support the idea that gifted students need opportunities to interact with gifted peers (Kulik, 1992; Rogers, 1991); to be challenged; and, as the National Commission on Excellence in Education (1983) put it, to perform "on the boundary of individual ability in ways that test and push back personal limits" (p. 12). Without a strong policy statement regarding the need for flexible and varied grouping arrangements that will facilitate and enhance teaching and learning, local school districts will be inclined to follow the de-tracking bandwagon. State policies should:

- Recommend that local school districts provide a variety of settings, groupings, and modes of instruction for each student.
- Provide guidance for local school districts to create learning communities and design schools with a climate for excellence.

7. A few states suggest that districts "provide guidance to assist gifted students in addressing personal and interpersonal needs, in program selection, and in career and college choices." Some recommend that each local district provide for training counselors "in the specific counseling and guidance needs of the gifted and talented, and that the social and emotional needs of these students be addressed." A few states suggest special support services such as counseling be provided to gifted underachievers and traditionally underrepresented groups. A policy statement should not necessarily recommend separate staffing for the gifted, but should certainly address the particular needs of the gifted. A state policy should:

- Acknowledge that gifted students do have distinct academic, affective, and social counseling needs as a consequence of their talent potential and the milieu in which it is nurtured.
- Recommend that since all professional staff members have counseling responsibilities for the students with which they work, appropriate inservice programs should be provided to sensitize them to the needs of their gifted and talented students.
- Recommend specific attention be given to determining and responding to the particular counseling needs of underrepresented populations.

8. Most states acknowledge the crucial role of teachers in the identification and education of the gifted, the necessity of ensuring the selection of appropriate teachers for the gifted, and the need for providing staff development. Yet, only a third of the states have any kind of special certification or endorsement for teachers of the gifted.

Over the years there has been research on what are perceived to be the desirable characteristics and behaviors of teachers for the gifted. Those findings, plus a fair amount of subjective testimony, provide the basis for several states' statements. The literature suggests that teachers of the gifted do need skills and competencies beyond those required for teachers generally. One state's guidelines, for example, includes criteria for the selection of teachers that are based on a set of eight "competencies and characteristics supported by research as being important to effective teaching of the gifted."

While there is some attention given to matters regarding teacher selection and certification, policy statements completely ignore the leadership role of the school administrator and other district personnel in the task of talent development.

Schools aiming to develop a wide range of talents are coming to recognize that there is a rich reservoir of persons with specialized aptitudes and high levels of achievement who have demonstrated their own "giftedness" and who can serve as mentors and role models.

Currently, nationwide professional standards for teachers of the gifted are being developed and discussed, part of a trend of considering national standards for professional educators in general. Until those standards are formulated, state policies should:

- Provide local districts with research-based guidance regarding the need for teachers who have the competencies, attitudes, temperament, and commitment to work with students with diverse talents.
- Recommend and support staff development programs that provide all teachers with knowledge about the needs of gifted students.
- Support the identification and involvement of a variety of "teachers of the gifted," including non-school personnel, who can serve as mentors and role models.
- Support staff development experiences for administrators and other building and district personnel so that they fill leadership roles in the programs for the gifted.

9. Many states require or recommend program evaluation as an element of local plans for the gifted. Some view evaluation as an integral part of the program decision-making process. Several states require program evaluation as part of the monitoring process or in connection with funding.

Because the outcomes of programs for the gifted are and should be more complex than those for the regular program, student evaluation becomes a more difficult process. Most standardized testing, a common means of assessment, places severe limitations on what can be evaluated and how it is done. Consequently, many districts are moving toward more product and performance assessment. State policy statements should:

- Encourage local school districts to undertake multi-level formative and summative evaluation of all aspects of the talent identification and development program.
- Provide guidance to local districts for undertaking more "authentic evaluation"—i.e., more meaningful and relevant assessment that will lead to improved learning opportunities for gifted and talented students.
- Provide technical expertise to local districts to refine their skills and competence for designing and implementing evaluation and assessment.

10. There are joys and problems experienced in parenting in all families. In the case of families with gifted children, parents report additional pleasures and problems for which they often seek help from the school.

Texas's state plan asserts that "if the gifted/talented program is to be successful, parents must be included as partners in the education of their children and should receive information related to the program objectives and activities that can support the school process." A number of states recommend or require that parents of the gifted be involved in all or some specific aspects of the program—identification, placement, enrichment, access, support, and advocacy. State policies range from statements encouraging parents "to take an active role in the education of their gifted and talented children" to more specific guidelines asserting that parent involvement is "needed to ensure that an appropriate program is developed, implemented, evaluated, and maintained." In states where the gifted come under the P.L. 94-142 umbrella, the rights and responsibilities of parents are clearly denoted. State policies should:

- Communicate clearly the legal rights and responsibilities of parents regarding their child and the school's program.
- Provide guidance to local districts regarding the ways parents can be effectively involved in their child's education.

11. It has long been recognized that education and socialization take place in many settings other than the school and classroom. Confining educational activities for the gifted to the school and its classrooms places severe limitations on the nature and outcomes of their learning opportunities.

Persons with specialized aptitudes and expertise exercise their talents and practice their specializations in the community. They constitute a rich pool of teachers, mentors and role models for students. Museums, libraries, laboratories, studios, performing arts centers, industries, media, and governmental agencies all represent resources in the community that can enrich the educational experiences of gifted and other students.

Often the quality of experiences that can be realized from learning engagements with experts and the use of community resources far exceeds that which the school can make available. State policies should:

- Recommend and authorize the extension of educational opportunities beyond the boundaries of the classroom to capitalize on the rich human and material resources.
- Reduce the barriers and resistance to experiences in non-school settings by revising any legal limits to community-based experiential learning for all students.
- Encourage local districts to consider granting credit for non-classroom experience.

12. The level of funding in those states where financial support for gifted education is provided varies widely. The formulas and bases for distributing grants or funds also differ. Some states provide funding for specific purposes—identification, instructional and administrative salaries, equipment and materials, transportation, and evaluation.

Regardless of the level of state funding, such financing has an impact on local programming. For example, if districts could only be reimbursed for identifying or

programming for "no more than three percent of their pupil population," it was that percentage that was involved.

State funding for the gifted is a significant but not absolute determinant of programs for such students—i.e., there are states in which local programs operate with only minimal or even no state financial support. On the other hand, there is no question that state funding of programs for the gifted, at whatever level, makes a positive statement and spurs local efforts.

The economic problems of the early 1990s underscored the precarious nature of financing of programs for the gifted as many states cut or reduced funding for such programs. Often programs for the gifted are viewed as "frills," to be eliminated when financing becomes tight. Cuts in state funding for the gifted resulted in the curtailment of many local programs for those students.

Even during good times, governments never have sufficient resources to fund all programs deserving support. Programs for the gifted must always compete for limited resources. There is, therefore, little point in asserting that states should appropriate more funds for programs for the gifted. An important step, however, would be for a state's policy to:

- Express a firm conviction that education of the gifted constitutes a high priority and that such programs do require additional funding for very clear purposes.
- Commit the state to some level of funding—even if it be at a very minimal level—as a manifestation of the state's good faith and a way of encouraging local districts to budget for the gifted.
- Provide financial support for state-wide, state-directed programs such as summer residential programs, governor's schools, professional conferences, and staff development.

Moving Forward in Educating the Gifted and Talented

Education of the gifted and talented does not take place in a vacuum. The passage of legislation or formulation of regulations that express a state's policy occurs as part of a complex social, economic, political, and educational context.

The past decades have witnessed major societal developments that impact on education and schooling in general and, of course, on the education of the gifted and talented. This is not the document for an analysis of the always dramatic and often traumatic changes in demography, family structure and relationships, social climate, nature of adolescence, community and policy, media, and communication and every other aspect of individual and societal life in America. Some 75 years ago, the Commission on the Reorganization of Secondary Education (1918) detailed the changes that had occurred in America since the 1890s and argued that education "should be determined by the needs of society to be served, the character of the individuals to be educated, and the knowledge of educational theory and practice available" (p. 1). Massive as they were, those changes pale compared to the more recent societal transformations.

A few examples of developments in the area of educational reform indicate the kind of changes educators of the gifted need to consider as they review and reassess state policies:

1. For the past 20 years, there have been continuing clarion calls for school reform and change. The "crises" that led to these efforts have shifted during this period, but educational reform is still high on America's agenda. Clearly, America cannot be "first in the world in math and science" and achieve "world class educational standards" while neglecting those students who are most capable of high academic attainment. Nor can schools serve the needs of all students while failing to include those with unusual potential. Education of the gifted must and can become a spearhead in school restructuring and curriculum reform for all students, not just for those who have been categorized as "gifted." It can do this by contributing to reform in curriculum and teaching, those areas in which educators of the gifted have been most creative and innovative in the past.

In response to the thrust for school reform, including shared decision-making and site-based management, curriculum integration and enrichment for all students, and the design of "learning communities," educators of the gifted have new opportunities to share their practices and expertise with their colleagues on school improvement teams. In some districts, for example, educators of the gifted have been designated "academic consultants," visiting classrooms to provide general enrichment for the entire student population, and contributing to building and district staff development and curriculum design efforts.

School reform and restructuring pose a particular challenge for educators of the gifted—an opportunity for curriculum design, adaptation and integration of new technologies, application and adaptation of new teaching strategies, new classroom and school organization that would make gifted education a more integral part of "education for all" while contributing to the goals of reform efforts.

2. A dominant theme throughout this period has been that of "Excellence and Equity." In its 1983 report, *A Nation at Risk*, the National Commission on Excellence in Education asserted that: "The twin goals of equity and high quality schooling have a profound and practical meaning for our economy and society, and we cannot permit one to yield to the other either in principle or practice" (p. 12). In some school settings, education

of the gifted is perceived as "high quality schooling" but as impeding the attainment of equity. From its early years, education of the gifted has been viewed by some as elitist, unnecessary, and iniquitous.

The large number of students who are underrepresented in programs for the gifted (i.e., ethnic and racial minorities, those from low socioeconomic or impoverished groups, and those with limited English proficiency), fan the equity-excellence issue. The rekindling of the ability grouping-tracking controversy stems from the equity-excellence issue.

State policies are being examined in terms of the dual goals of equity and excellence, particularly in the identification process. Coleman and Gallagher (1992) "examined policies related to the identification and placement of students who do not meet the standard criteria" and found that "in 39 states, different criteria can be used to identify students from special populations" (p. 18).

The Jacob K. Javits Gifted and Talented Education Act of 1988 (P.L. 100-297) declares that talent potential is actually widespread: "Youngsters with talent are found in all cultural groups across all economic strata, and in all areas of human endeavor." Efforts to nurture talent potential in populations that have tended to underachieve, contribute to the enhanced attainment of both equity and excellence. Moreover, programs for the gifted help define the possibilities of high quality schooling and equal access to such educational opportunities for all learners.

Dissemination of the insights from the various Javits grant programs as well as the experiences with non-standard identification procedures could help shape policy changes needed to strengthen programs and practices for identifying and nurturing the gifted in underrepresented groups—an important step in attaining equity and excellence.

Since the perennial issue of excellence and equity (not excellence versus equity) must be resolved, state policies need to be reviewed in a broad context. How is the issue addressed in state policy? Does the policy ignore the issue or does it reflect an intent to enable the education of the gifted to contribute positively to the attainment of these twin goals?

3. The last quarter of a century has witnessed a growing, substantive body of research that has extended knowledge concerning the nature and diversity of talent potential, individual differences, learning, cognition, and human development. There has been a surge of new knowledge from research on the brain, neuropsychology, and neurophysiology; prevailing notions of creativity and creative behavior have been drastically modified; and differences in learning styles are better understood. Increasingly, diversity is being understood as a strength, not a limitation. Research on the behavior and functioning of gifted individuals has deepened insights regarding human similarities and diversity, providing leads for teachers to enhance learning for all students, teaching and learning for all learners, not just the gifted. For example, once the province of the gifted as an "enrichment area," critical thinking has become an instructional area for all students.

With enhanced understanding of human variability and diversity, educators of the gifted are now dealing with larger talent pools and disseminating instructional processes found to be appropriate with such populations. However, many state policies are still entrenched in static notions of learning potential, ways of assessing individual differences, and nurturing talents. Those state policies need to be reexamined in light of newer concepts of talent and its development and the implications for cultivating talent potential more generally.

4. Though the concepts of "differentiated education" and "differentiated curriculum" did not originate with programs for the gifted—educators have long been concerned with individualization of instruction—these ideas constitute the foundation base for providing appropriate experiences for the gifted and talented. Accelerated and enriched learning experiences, the traditional watchwords of gifted education, have long since been extended and applied to general education. The essence of differentiated curriculum—appropriate pacing of learning, breadth and depth of experience, interdisciplinary study, individualized and extended learning opportunities—is being applied to teaching and learning generally. Adapting curriculum to learning styles was introduced many years ago in modifying instruction to specific aptitudes and expressive talents. Many of the models and systems for educating the gifted have provided designs that can be adapted for use with other students, enriching their learning opportunities. What has been and is being learned about differentiated education for the gifted has implications for "mainstream education" as well.

State policies need to be reexamined in terms of the extent to which they limit or restrict differentiated curricula. Are state requirements too rigid and inflexible? Are policies designed to encourage and enable students to pursue individual interests freely?

5. Various kinds of groupings—special classes, resource rooms, pull-out programs and special schools—have traditionally been associated with the gifted, although neither ability grouping nor tracking practices were ever restricted to that population. Once again, concerns about equal access to knowledge and learning opportunities have been voiced in connection with the various forms of grouping and class organization.

The move to "de-track" and move toward "heterogeneous grouping" for all classes, at all levels, under all circumstances, results in student diversity with which teachers are often not equipped to deal. At all levels but especially at the secondary level, serious questions have been raised about tracking practices as they affect equitable teaching and learning. The press to "de-track schools," often accompanied by the abolition of honors classes and other programs for high achieving learners as well as other tracks for lower achievers, raises serious questions about providing adequate and appropriate learning experiences for all. Because de-tracking is seldom accompanied by necessary and appropriate staff or curriculum development, teachers cope only with difficulty. As a result, gifted students, as well as others, go unchallenged.

The "equal access to knowledge" controversy is at the heart of America's efforts to provide equal educational opportunities for all. While no advocate of equal access really argues for a "Procrustean Bed curriculum," proposals for attaining such access often result in just such curricula, especially when "equal" is interpreted as meaning "identical." Some educators have focused on differentiating pedagogical strategies as means for providing equal access.

Proposals for de-tracking offer no panaceas for dealing with the problems of organizing students for instruction and equal access. "Cooperative Learning" is often extolled as a way of providing for all learners and, while this strategy has many strengths and some promise, it obviously is not an elixir. Research and experience have established the need for a variety of flexible grouping arrangements to facilitate teaching and learning.

State policies regarding special programs and groups—e.g., honors classes, Advanced Placement, accelerated programs, and pull-out programs—need to be reassessed in terms of how to maintain those provisions in light of other policies that prohibit or restrict those kinds of arrangements. The issue is not one of whether or not all students should be provided equal access to knowledge and learning opportunities but, rather, what

kinds of grouping are needed to facilitate optimum teaching and learning for students of diverse abilities and attainment? What policies will encourage local districts to design appropriate grouping options? If funding is tied to providing for "identified gifted students," what grouping arrangements will be permitted for such students?

6. There is now a sustained effort to develop national standards and testing programs growing out of school reform efforts. For example, in their "Statement of Principles on School Reform in Mathematics and Science," the Department of Education and the National Science Foundation asserted:

> National content standards for students (what children should know and be able to do) must be developed and utilized as the basis for all other improvement activities, including instructional practices, assessment, and teacher preparation.
>
> National content, assessment, and teacher preparation standards will serve as the foundation for grants to states to reform curriculum frameworks and local curricula, and for reform of instructional methods, textbooks, teacher education and certification, inservice programs, and student assessment.

Since the early 1980s, more than three-fourths of the states have undertaken assessment programs to strengthen student, teacher, and school accountability. Most such programs have provided for minimal competence testing only. Development of so-called "authentic assessment programs," evaluation procedures which are more closely related to student products and performance through tests, portfolio assessment, and other processes will certainly be affected by national standards and testing.

States will need to review their policies for the gifted in light of the overall press for national standards and testing. A number of issues are raised: Should standards be content standards or performance standards? Should states be bound to, or only be guided by, national standards? Should a national achievement testing program be developed and implemented and, if so, should states be required to participate in such a program? Should the same standards be applied to all students or should there be different standard levels? Should all students be required to know and be able to do the same things?

7. The National Defense Education Act of 1958 was a watershed in terms of the role of the federal government in education—not only for what was then the U.S. Office of Education but for other federal agencies as well. As noted above, publication of the National Commission on Excellence in Education's *A Nation at Risk* (1983) put the federal government squarely at the head of school reform. By 1984, there were literally hundreds of state commissions examining some aspect of school reform and making recommendations, many triggered by *A Nation at Risk*.

During the recent past, often with the support of the National Governors Association, a set of "Six National Goals" has been promulgated; "American 2000," a nationwide grassroots reform effort, has been created and now reestablished as "Goals 2000: Educate America;" private funding for a "break the mold schools" program has been set in motion; a National Council on Education Standards and Testing has been approved and funded; such agencies as the National Science Foundation have again become involved in improving curriculum; and the Jacob K. Javits Gifted and Talented Students Education Act of 1988 was passed.

These federal activities and others had, and continue to have, an impact on the education of the gifted and talented, even though with the exception of the Javits legislation, this population is seldom specifically mentioned. As the federal government

emerges as a "major player" in education and schooling in its legislation and regulation, states will have to reassess their policies regarding education of the gifted and talented in the context of other reform efforts.

In the Fall of 1993, the U.S. Department of Education's Office of Educational Research and Improvement released the first major report on gifted and talented since the *Marland Report* some 20 years earlier. This report is titled *National Excellence: The Case for Developing America's Talent* (Department of Education, 1993) and takes the position that American education is engaged in reform efforts to upgrade the quality of education for all students and that the concerns for students with outstanding talents must also be included in the "all."

The definition used in this report is based on that used in the Jacob K. Javits Gifted and Talented Education Act:

> Children and youth with outstanding talent perform or show the potential for performing at remarkably high levels of accomplishment when compared with others of their age, experience, or environment.
>
> These children and youth exhibit high performance capability in intellectual, creative, and/or artistic areas, possess an unusual leadership capacity, or excel in specific academic fields. They require services or activities not ordinarily provided by the schools.
>
> Outstanding talents are present in children and youth from all cultural groups, across all economic strata, and in all areas of human endeavor (p. 46).

The report makes six major recommendations:

1. **Challenging curriculum standards.** The nation must establish performance standards in the core subjects that challenge students performing at the highest levels....

    - Educators must develop assessment procedures based on standards that accurately measure the accomplishments of students who perform at the highest levels.

2. **High-Level Learning Opportunities.** The nation must establish comprehensive and advanced learning opportunities that meet the needs of children with outstanding talents in every school in the nation....

    - Schools must also assess students' levels of competence in the regular school curriculum in each of the core subjects and provide alternative learning opportunities for students who have mastered them.
    - Communities must establish learning opportunities for students both inside and outside of the regular classroom and both inside and outside of the school building. Communities must also ensure that students have many options that draw on the community's resources.

3. **Early childhood education.** The nation must ensure that all children, especially economically disadvantaged and minority children, have access to an early childhood education that develops their potential....

   - Communities must establish programs that work with parents and other primary care givers to help them understand ways to nurture the talents of their children and help them achieve in school....

4. **Extended opportunities for economically disadvantaged and minority children.** The nation must increase opportunities for economically disadvantaged and minority children with exceptional talent to participate in advanced learning opportunities. Special efforts are required to overcome the barriers to achievement that many economically disadvantaged and minority students face....

   - Schools must eliminate barriers for economically disadvantaged and minority students with outstanding talents.

5. **Teacher training and technical assistance provided.** Teachers are the key to success in our vision of excellent education. They must be prepared to work with advanced materials and to use complex teaching strategies with a variety of students. Teaching materials appropriate for use with talented students must also be developed....

6. **Match World Performance.** The nation must ensure that high achieving students in the United States match or exceed the performance of high achieving students anywhere in the world....(pp. 48-52).

The report sets a very different tone from that of the *Marland Report*. It asserts that: "To a significant degree, programs for the gifted and talented students have demonstrated for education at large what challenging curriculum and teaching strategies look like, which in turn, has shown the way for establishing higher expectations for all students" (p. 7). The report focuses on *excellence* for all students— "We must build better schools in order to create a better society. But we need better schools, too, because *all* children, including those with outstanding talents, deserve an education that helps each of them develop their special qualities" (p. 54).

With the publication of *National Excellence: The Case for Developing America's Talents*, once again the federal government is providing leadership regarding the education of the gifted and talented, this time in the context of achieving excellence among all learners, including those with special talents and abilities. The issuance of the report should provide an impetus for state policy review, particularly since it is based squarely in the context of current school reform and restructuring efforts.

In Conclusion

Education of the gifted did not begin with the *Marland Report*, although the long and interesting history of those efforts to identify and nurture talent potential tends to be forgotten. What is different about education of the gifted and talented during the past two decades is that states have enacted legislation, formulated rules and promulgated regulations that have, in a sense, finally legitimized and institutionalized gifted education.

What constitutes consistent, committed state policy? It is, first and foremost, policy that makes a positive statement and promotes appropriate education for the gifted. Policy advocacy involves more than a philosophical statement; it is much more significant when it also deals with all of the other elements of an effective plan for educating gifted and talented—components such as definition, identification, curriculum, standards for excellence in programming, teachers, and evaluation.

The facts that: all of the states have legitimized gifted education, often through strong mandate statements; most states have established offices or bureaus for gifted education in state education departments; 49 states have designated full- or part-time state coordinators for the gifted (Coleman & Gallagher, 1992, p. 9); many states provide funding at various levels for various elements of gifted education; many state departments produce or disseminate curriculum and other instructional materials; many states now require program evaluation, often as a requisite for funding—all indicate that education of the gifted and talented is on a firmer footing than it has ever been.

Having achieved the goal of recognition of the gifted and talented in state policies, advocates of gifted education must now take into account developments that affect the implementation of mandates or discretionary support for services at the local level. Educators and advocates of education for the gifted and talented must now build on and strengthen these state policies in two ways:

First, there is a considerable body of research, theory, experience, and evaluation data that has accumulated, even during the lean years of gifted education, that must be applied in the reshaping or implementing of policies guiding or regulating education of the gifted. We have moved a long way toward understanding better the nature of talent potential, the diversity in human aptitudes and abilities, the need for considering the total learning context, the nature and range of educational and instructional processes that nurture talent potential, the human resources needed to nourish talent potential, the technology available to extend learning, the social contexts in which talent potential is cultivated, and the possibilities for evaluating individuals and programs. These new understandings, insights, and knowledge are, for the most part, not part of current state policies. They need to become part of those policies in the ways local districts interpret and implement them.

Second, educators of the gifted have long recognized that the basic business of all education and schooling is that of talent development, ensuring that talent potential grows into talented performances and products. While educators of the gifted and talented are concerned with a population that has manifested potential for outstanding achievement and has designed differentiated education for those students, much of what has been learned about the processes of differentiation has applicability to the nurturing of all kinds and levels of talent. Educators of the gifted recognize that differentiated education does not mean high quality for some and inferior quality for others but rather the design and implementation of adequate and appropriate learning

experiences for all children, including those with special gifts or talents. The reform movements provide a real opportunity to take gifted education out of its often "separate, isolated track" and make it a central element in the schools' total efforts in talent development.

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The National Center on the Gifted and Talented
The University of Connecticut
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NRC G/T

The National Research Center on the Gifted and Talented Research Teams

The University of Connecticut

Dr. Francis X. Archambault, Associate Director
The University of Connecticut
School of Education, U-64
Storrs, CT 06269-2064
203-486-4031

Dr. Alexinia Y. Baldwin
Dr. Scott W. Brown
Dr. Deborah E. Burns
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The University of Georgia

Dr. Mary M. Frasier, Associate Director
The University of Georgia
Department of Educational Psychology
323 Aderhold Hall
Athens, GA 30602-7146
404-542-5106

Dr. Scott L. Hunsaker

The University of Virginia

Dr. Carolyn M. Callahan, Associate Director
Curry School of Education
The University of Virginia
405 Emmet Street
Charlottesville, VA 22903
804-982-2849

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Yale University

Dr. Robert J. Sternberg, Associate Director
Yale University
Psychology Department
Box 11-A, Yale Station
New Haven, CT 06520-7447
203-432-4633

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